

***Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies
(LGBTQ&A) Preconference***

***Transcending the Rhetoric of “Family Values”:
Celebrating Families of Choice
and Families of Value***

June 4, 2008

University of Missouri-St Louis



Love Makes A Family

Families Come in All Shapes, Sizes, and Colors

FREE SPEECH ★ EQUALITY ★ ACCOUNTABILITY

MY FAMILY VALUES

LIBERTY ★ EDUCATION ★ TOLERANCE ★ PEACE



**HATE
IS NOT A
FAMILY
VALUE**

My Family Values Same-Sex Marriage

My Family Values

A Living Wage

**CIVIL RIGHTS
ARE
FAMILY
VALUES**

Single people have families and values too!

Hypocrisy is a Poor Family Value

***Transcending the Rhetoric of “Family Values”:
Celebrating Families of Choice and Families of Value***

**THE 2008 ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH CONFERENCE
(AERC) LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, QUEER &
ALLIES (LGBTQ&A) PRE-CONFERENCE**

University of Missouri-St. Louis

St. Louis, Missouri

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

**Pre-Conference Proceedings Edited by
Thomas V. Bettinger**

Pre-Conference Organizers:

**Thom Bettinger (tbettinger@aol.com)
Julie Gedro (Julie.Gedro@esc.edu)**

Special thanks to Dr. Tonette Rocco of Florida International University for
her suggestion for this year’s pre-conference theme.

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**THE 2008 AERC LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER,
QUEER & ALLIES (LGBTQ&A) PRE-CONFERENCE**

Pre-Conference Location: University of Missouri-St. Louis

St. Louis, Missouri

<http://www.umsl.edu/divisions/conted/education/aerc2008/>

Wednesday, June 4, 2008

9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Pre-conference Organizers:

Thom Bettinger (tbettinger@aol.com)

Julie Gedro (Julie.Gedro@esc.edu)

PRE-CONFERENCE CALL FOR PAPERS

(Due Date for Proposals: [extended to February 21, 2008](#))

PRE-CONFERENCE TITLE:

***Transcending the rhetoric of “family values”:
Celebrating families of choice and families of value***

Halperin (1995) outlines two ways of contesting homophobia—by exposing the “operations of homophobic discourses,” and by creating “specific opportunities for the voices of the disempowered to be heard, recorded, published, and circulated” (p. 52). By helping to manifest the rhetoric of “family values” as a homophobic discourse, and as a forum for the discussion of diverse family forms and structures, this pre-conference will allow contributors to make progress on both fronts.

Although there is little agreement on what constitutes a “family,” the term itself carries great societal and cultural force. Some seek to impose “official” definitions upon a family structure limiting it to those related by blood, marriage, or adoption; whereas, to others and particularly in everyday parlance, family is often understood as any two or more people who feel emotionally committed to each other. This latter understanding deviates from the archetypical view of the “nuclear family” which approaches sacrosanct status in the American psyche, and which is deeply embedded in many social, cultural, and legal institutions. Heteronormative assumptions regarding gender roles underpin this idealized family, which consists of a legally married (biologically male) husband and a (biologically female) wife, approximately 2 children, and the obligatory dog or cat. Although a wife may work outside the home, her primary responsibility is that of taking care of the home, husband, and children; while the husband's main task is breadwinning “although he may, on occasion, deign to ‘help out’ around the house” (Bernstein and Reimann, 2001, p. 3).

This hegemonic view of what constitutes a family discounts the heterogeneity of contemporary family forms and structures. Family structures which vary from the

unitary form of an intact, heterosexual, two-parent norm are judged to be inadequate—whether they be heterosexual couples who intentionally choose not to produce offspring, single-parent families, stepfamilies, or families whose members are not related by the marriage, blood, or law. Perhaps the most forceful and vitriolic opposition is reserved for those LGBTQ individuals whose very existence is seen by some as a threat to the sanctioned heterosexual order and to society itself; and whose efforts to establish and function in healthy family units (either similar in structure to “traditional” heteronormative models, or in “families of choice” unrestricted by normative gender behaviors, or matters of blood relationship and legal recognition) are oftentimes strongly resisted.

A call for a return to “family values” is the chief rallying cry of this resistance. This vague term is used by various groups to represent different things. In contemporary North America, “family values” serves most often as an ideological code among social and religious conservatives to conjure up a set of ambiguous moral beliefs specifically in response to a perception of declining morality. With the archetypal nuclear family at its core, this concept of family values emphasizes normative gender roles and behaviors, and is decidedly heteronormative and expressly homophobic. This “traditional” view of family is not a panacea for the problems society faces; furthermore, “the family can no longer be an assumed institution in policy discussions, but must be an explicitly self-conscious, constantly reconsidered configuration that reflects both existing reality and collective responsibility” (Fineman, 1995, p. 236). Ironically, one of the coded ways LGBTQ people have of acknowledging other similarly situated people is to ask if they “are family”; “and in this referencing, we hint at a utopian construction of ‘families of choice’ that is not bound by definitions of blood, of law, of sex, of gender (Walters, 2001, p. 354).

This call for the 6th annual LGBTQ&A Pre-Conference invites your involvement in three ways: (a) presentation of papers on the theme of family values, families of value, and families of choice; (b) presentation of papers on any other LGBTQ-related adult education; and (c) an invitation to participate in a group discussion of evolving notions and understandings of what family means in your life. Feel free to bring pictures, objects, and other materials to add to the dialogue and to acknowledge and honor those, past or present, who you consider as family. We encourage you to reflect on how these issues inform your LGBTQ educational practices, research, and/or cultural work; and on their relevance to the discourse and practice in adult education.

PRE-CONFERENCE FORMAT:

- (1) Paper presentations (selected from proposals)
- (2) Guest speaker (TBD)
- (3) Open dialogue session

PAPER PRESENTATIONS / ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:

- Depending on the number of proposals accepted, each presenter will have about thirty minutes (30 min.) to present on the day of the pre-conference.

- For presentation proposals, submit: Name, affiliation, mailing and email addresses, and phone number of author(s)/presenter(s); Title of presentation; AV requests; and an *Abstract* (no more than 250 words) of the paper or alternative format presentation.
- Spacing, margins, font, and other formatting for all written submissions should follow AERC guidelines for conference papers (see <http://www.adulterc.org>).
- The deadline for submission of proposals is extended to **February 21, 2008**. Please **send proposals by email**, in MicroSoft WORD to: tbettinger@aol.com
- A committee of the LGBTQ&A Caucus will review all proposals. Review criteria will include relevance of the proposal to the Pre-Conference theme, quality of submission, and significance of the topic to expanding our conceptualizations of adult education and advancing its inclusive possibilities.
- **Accepted authors** will be notified by **March 16, 2008**; and must submit a **written paper** (by email to tbettinger@aol.com) from three to six pages in length, single-spaced and following AERC guidelines, by **April 21, 2008** for inclusion in the Pre-Conference Proceedings.
- Cost of attending the pre-Conference: \$20 (includes refreshments and copy of pre-conference proceedings).
- Pre-conference registration/payment can be done in conjunction with AERC 2008 registration (<http://www.umsi.edu/divisions/conted/education/aerc2008/>); or by contacting either Thom Bettinger (tbettinger@aol.com) or Julie Gedro (Julie.Gedro@esc.edu)

LGBTQ&A CAUCUS INFORMATION:

In addition to the Pre-conference, the annual LGBTQ&A Caucus meeting will be held during the **AERC 2008**--with time and location to be noted in the main conference schedule.

References

- Bernstein, M., & Reimann, R. (2001). Queer families and the politics of visibility. In M. Bernstein & R. Reimann (Eds.), *Queer families, queer politics: Challenging culture and the state* (pp. 1-17). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fineman, M. A. (1995). *The neutered mother, the sexual family, and other twentieth-century tragedies*. New York: Routledge.
- Halperin, D. M. (1995). *Saint Foucault: Towards a gay hagiography*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Walters, S. D. (2001). Take my domestic partner, please: Gays and marriage in the era of the visible. In M. Bernstein & R. Reimann (Eds.), *Queer families, queer politics: Challenging culture and the state* (pp. 338-357). New York: Columbia University Press.

LGBTQ&A PRE-CONFERENCE SCHEDULE:

Sessions are a maximum of 30 minutes which includes time for Q&A

07:30 am - 09:00 am

Meet, Greet, and Eat! (Breakfast)

09:00 am - 09:15 am

*Welcome and Introductions, **Thom Bettinger and Julie Gedro***

09:15 am - 09:35 am

A retrospective on the LGBTQ&A Caucus/SIG and Pre-Conference--

Hidden & Displayed: Queer Memory Work Revisited

Robert J. Hill

09:35 am – 09:45 am

For Better, for Worse, or Not at All: Re-conceptualizing the Meaning of Family and Valuing All Families

Thomas V. Bettinger

09:45 am - 10:15 am

On the Origin of Families: A Metaphorical Darwinian Perspective of LGBTQ Families

Tamara Priestley

10:15 am - 10:30 am BREAK

10:30 am – 11:00 am

Adult Learning in the Queer Nation: A Foucauldian Analysis of Educational Strategies for Social Change

Wayland Walker

11:00-11:30

Educational Considerations for the Workplace Family Regarding Transgender Persons

Patricia J. Brainard

11:30 am -12:45 pm Lunch/Award Presentation

Building Bridges, Creating Access, Acknowledging Differences, Embracing Diversity: A Tribute to Brenda Henson (1945-2008)

Robert J. Hill

12:45 pm - 1:15 pm

Lesbianism as the Practice of Freedom

Julie Gedro

1:15 pm -1:45 pm

Why Heterosexual African Americans Should Support Same-Gender Marriage

Joyce McNickles

1:45 pm - 2:00 pm BREAK

2:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Racist and Homophobic Bullying in Adulthood: Narratives from Gay Men of Color in Higher Education

Mitsunori Misawa

2:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Joining The Family: Experiences of Be(com)ing Ally Activists

Matthew A. Eichler

3:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Slamming the Closet Door and Taking Control: Analysis of Personal Transformation and Social Change as LGBT Podcasting Blazes a Trail of Democratization of the Media

Kathleen P. King

3:30 pm – 3:45 pm

LGBT Families and the Episcopal Church

G. Thomas Luck & Julie Gedro

3:45 pm – 04:00 pm Wrap-up

Hidden & Displayed: Queer Memory Work Revisited (2003-2008)

Bob Hill

bobhill@uga.edu



Hidden & Displayed: Queer Memory Work Revisited (2003-2008)

Bob Hill

University of Georgia
Adult Education Program, LEAP
Athens, GA 30602-4811
bobhill@uga.edu

Abstract

In 2003 I presented at the AERC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies PreConference the paper, "Working memory at AERC: A Queer welcome ... and a Retrospective," that reappears in Part two of this paper. This presentation updates the Hidden and Displayed Presence of sexual minorities at AERC in the intervening half-decade (2003-2008).

PART I (2003 – 2008) History

Note that 2008 is an important year! It is the 16th anniversary of the AERC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies Caucus---and the 6th year of an AERC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies PreConference!

The LGBTQ&A Caucus and/or PreConference have a history of sponsoring Guest Speakers, mostly at Caucus meetings. During the period under review, the following Caucus and PreConference took place:

2003 – 1st PreConference

The year 2003 marked the AERC's first Queer PreConference and the 10th anniversary of the AERC LGBTQ&A Caucus.

June 5, 2003, San Francisco State University

PreConference Title: Queer Histories: Exploring Fugitive Forms Of Social Knowledge

Activities: 1:30 pm for a late lunch in the Castro, followed by a 3 ½ hour guided walking tour with a noted San Francisco historian. (http://sfphototour.tripod.com/castro_street.html)

Caucus: A Round Table Discussion with **John DeCecco**, Saturday Afternoon, June 7th, 2003, 4:30 - 5:30 pm, Burk Hall Room 236

Organizers:

Bob Hill (bobhill@uga.edu)

André P. Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca)

2004 – 2nd PreConference

May 27, 2004 (Half Day, Afternoon – Paper/Alternative Format Presentations from 1:00pm – 5:00pm), Thursday, Faculty of Education, MacLaurin Building, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

PreConference Title: *LGBTQ Resilience And Inclusion Transgressing Adult Education to Be, Become, and Belong*

Activities: Those interested went to dinner as a group in downtown Victoria.

Caucus: In addition to the pre-conference, the annual LGBTQ & A Caucus meeting was held during the main AERC-CASAE/ACÉÉA 2004 conference at a time noted in the main conference schedule. We were delighted to have **James Chamberlain** as the guest speaker. James is a primary teacher and gay activist who won a major victory for LGBTQ rights in the Supreme Court of Canada.

Organizers:

André P. Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca)

Bob Hill (bobhill@uga.edu)

2005 – 3rd PreConference

June 2, 2005, 9:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Thursday, Georgia Center for Continuing Education University of Georgia, Athens, GA

PreConference Title: *Hear Me Out: Queer Narratives, Moral/izing Discourses & the Academy*

Activities: *The Triangle Project: Confronting Anti-LGBTQ Moral/izing Discourses.*

Participants at the LGBTQ&A PreConference initiated an “art as anti-oppression pedagogy” project.

Caucus: June 4, 2005 (Saturday), 5:30 – 6:30 pm in Room VW, featuring a presentation By **Miz Thang**, Lesbian Georgia *Outsider* (Folk) Artist

Organizers:

Bob Hill (bobhill@uga.edu), André P. Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca) Kristopher Wells (kris.wells@shaw.ca), Mitsu Misawa (mmisawa@uga.edu), and Wayland Walker (wwalker@uga.edu)

2006 – 4th PreConference

May 18, 2006, 9:00 pm – 5:00 pm, Thursday, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

PreConference Title: *Never Far Away: Separation, Subjugation, and Violence in LGBTQ Lives. Tropes of the Fence*

Caucus: May 20, 2006 (Saturday) 5:15 – 6:30 pm in Ballroom A, Presentation By **Alex Nelson**, female to male transsexual, who transitioned as a police officer. See:

<http://www.womenspress.com/main.asp?Search=1 &ArticleID=2303&SectionID=1 &SubSectionID=1 &S=1>

Organizers:

André P. Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca)

Kristopher Wells (kris.wells@ualberta.ca)
Bob Hill (bobhill@uga.edu)

2007 – 5th PreConference

June 6, 2007, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, Wednesday,
9:30 am – 3:00 pm

PreConference Title: *Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism*

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Issues in Organizational Settings

Caucus: June 7, 2007 (Thursday), 5 – 6 pm, Seton Academic Centre Room 430, Presentation by **Raymond Johnson**, co-chair of Egale (an organization that advances equality and justice for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans-identified people and their families) Canada's Education Committee, the chair of the Nova Scotia Teacher's Union (NSTU) LGBT committee, and a Teacher/ Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding, and Human Rights Liaison with the South Shore Regional School Board (SSRSB).

Organizers:

André P. Grace (andre.grace@ualberta.ca)
Bob Hill (bobhill@uga.edu)
Kristopher Wells (kris.wells@ualberta.ca)

2008 – 6th PreConference

The year 2008 marks the 1^{6th} anniversary of the AERC LGBTQ&A Caucus, and AERC's sixth Queer PreConference.

June 4, 2008, University of Missouri-St. Louis, Wednesday, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm

PreConference Title: *Transcending the rhetoric of “family values”: Celebrating families of choice and families of value*

Caucus: General Meeting to explore an Brenda and Wand Henson Adult Education Award of Valor

Organizers:

Thom Bettinger (tbettinger@aol.com)
Julie Gedro (Julie.Gedro@esc.edu)

Queer Words: A Conspectus of Papers at AERC Main Meetings (2003-2008)

Conference *Proceedings* from 2003-2008 were critically reviewed for papers, through an Internet search¹ of the AERC Website (found at <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/proceed.htm>). Author citations for the nine key words used in the First Report (Hill, 2003) were again employed (alphabetically listed here): **bisexual, gay, heterosexism, homophobia, lesbian, queer, sexual orientation, transgender, and transsexual.**

This analysis is less rigorous than in 2003, and lists only the results of the search for the key words in the titles and abstracts, *not within the bodies of the papers*. Thus, no cross comparison between the periods 1993 – 2003 and 2003 – 2008 can be made.

The following results are provided:

Bisexual (n = 1, Gedro, 2007)

Gay (n = 5, Bettinger, 2007; Gedro, 2007; Misawa, 2005; Misawa, 2006 and Wells, 2006)

Heterosexism (n = 1, Misawa, 2006)

Homophobia (n = 1, Gedro, 2007)

Lesbian (n = 1, Gedro, 2007)

Queer (n = 5, Egan, 2004; Egan, 2007; Grace & Wells, 2005; Misawa, 2006; and Wells, 2006)

Sexual orientation (n = 5, Alfred, 2004; Misawa, 2005; Misawa, 2006; Rocco & Gallagher, 2006; Rowland, 2006)

Transgender (n = 1, Gedro, 2007)

Transsexual (n = 0)

Note that a student, Chris Parker, at one point searched *AERC Proceedings* for papers direct linked to queer titles from 1994 - 2005. The results are found in Appendix 1.

Paper Titles 2003 – 2008 (Alphabetical by Author)

Note: The AREC Webpage does not list 2003 papers!

2004

Immigration as a Context for Learning:

What Do We Know About Immigrant Students In Adult Education?

Mary V. Alfred, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Abstract: The concept of diversity in education has received much attention in the social science literature, and since the mid-eighties, it has been receiving some attention in the literature of adult education. Diversity in adult education has focused primarily on race, class, gender, and sexual orientation and how these contexts impact teaching and learning. Little attention has been paid to culture and migration and how they influence learning among foreign-born students. This presentation will highlight the need for adult educators to give attention to the concept of immigration as a context for learning in adulthood. (Sexual orientation mentioned)

Not Str8: the Construction of Queer Male Identity in Sydney, Australia

John P. Egan, University of New South Wales

Abstract: This study examines the experiences of 14 queer young men in Sydney Australia. Using ethnographic methods, their stories are analyzed to delineate how their experiences “coming out” and coming into a queer male identity represents the acquisition and meaning-making of genuinely local, transgressive knowledges.

Antecedents and Consequences of Participation in a National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Workplace Conference

Julie Gedro, Empire State College / SUNY, USA

Abstract: This qualitative study examined participant motivation and outcomes of a national LGBT workplace conference. The conference provides educational workshops on a variety of LGBT related workplace issues, designed to provide information, education, business case strategies and personal empowerment.

2005

Social Learning for Fugitive Learners: The Out Is In Arts-Informed Queer Community Education Project in Alberta

André P. Grace & Kristopher Wells, University of Alberta, Canada

Abstract: In this paper we explore Alberta’s Out Is In project, which is an arts-

informed community education project that we developed to focus on the individual development, social learning, socialization, and inclusion of queer young adults. We discuss activities including a summer 2004 leadership and learning camp that used informal and nonformal learning approaches to achieve the project's goals.

***The Intersection of Race and Sexual Orientation
in Adult and Higher Education***

Mitsunori Misawa, University of Georgia, Athens

Abstract: This study examined the intersection of race and sexual orientation in adult and higher education by looking into the experiences of seven gay men of color to see how their identities impacted their learning and their lives on campus; and to see how education was serving them.

2006

***Queer Race Pedagogy in Adult Higher Education: Dealing with Power
Dynamics and Positionality of Gay Students of Color***

Mitsunori Misawa, University of Georgia, Athens

Abstract: This paper presents a theoretical concept of the intersection of race and sexual orientation and to describe Queer Race Pedagogy (QRP) in adult higher education. This paper provides an overview of racism and heterosexism in adult higher education and the two theories that are utilized to develop QRP.

Deconstructing heterosexual privilege with new science metaphors Tonette

S. Rocco, Suzanne J. Gallagher, Florida International University **Keywords:**

Sexual orientation, discrimination, quantum physics, ecology **Abstract:** The purpose of the paper is to deconstruct heterosexual privilege

in adult education through exploring metaphors in quantum physics and ecology.

Binary heterosexist boundaries are re-envisioned and alternative adult learning and education processes are suggested.

Adult Education Enters the Cultural Competency Craze

Michael L. Rowland, The Ohio State University

Abstract: This paper will provide a brief overview of the literature on cultural competency as it relates to health care. Cultural competency is a strategy to reduce and eliminate inequities in health care that are related to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexual orientation. The paper will provide a framework for health profession educators to understand cultural competency through the lens of adult education. (Sexual orientation mentioned)

Learning to Transgress: Queer Young Adults, Emotional Resilience, and Intellectual Resistance as Impetus for Lifelong Learning for Social Justice

Kristopher Wells, University of Alberta

Abstract: This paper employs critical social learning perspectives to investigate the themes of emotional resilience, intellectual resistance, and lifelong learning evident in the experiences of three gay male young adults whom I situate as activist-educators. I discuss how these young adults integrate emotional labour and social learning into resistance work to create counterpublics, which lay challenge to exclusionary heteronormative educational spaces.

2007

Gay Men at Midlife and Adult Learning: An Uneasy Truce with Heteronormativity

Thomas V. Bettinger, Pennsylvania State University Harrisburg, USA

Abstract: Thirteen gay men between the ages of 40 and 60 relate stories of their lived experiences, demonstrating both adherence and resistance to heteronormative societal expectations regarding aging gay men. Their stories have implications for adult development and adult education, two fields in which this group has largely been ignored.

The Social Construction of Safe: Young Queer Men and HIV Knowledge

John P Egan, University of British Columbia, Canada

Abstract: Part of an international comparative ethnography of queer young men in Sydney Australia and Vancouver Canada, this paper examines these men's learning about HIV/AIDS. Both the specifics of HIV infection (how) and the means by which to reduce one's vulnerability to HIV (what) are analyzed. Overall these men showed consistently accurate understanding of the what, even when their understanding of the how was flawed. This knowledge was almost entirely acquired from queer programs and services.

Antecedents and Consequences of Participation in a National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Workplace Conference

Julie Gedro

Empire State College / SUNY, USA

Abstract: This qualitative study examined participant motivation and outcomes of a national LGBT workplace conference. The conference provides educational workshops on a variety of LGBT related workplace issues, designed to provide information, education, business case strategies and personal empowerment.

LGBTQ PreConference Papers (2003 – 2008)

See Appendix 2

2003 (n = 7 papers)

2004 (n = 8 papers)

2005 (n = 6 papers)

2006 (n = 4 papers, 1 workshop)

2007 (n = 11 papers; 1 keynote)

2008 (n = ?)

2008 - New Developments

A Special Award. An Award posthumously presented to Brenda Henson (September 25, 1945 – February 8, 2008) for her untiring support of human rights. Brenda Kay Henson, age 62, Dumas, Arkansas, passionately devoted and loving, wife of Wanda Faye Reeves Henson, died at 11:47 pm February 8, 2008. She died peacefully at home in the grateful arms of her wife and surrounded by family and longtime friends.

Brenda is survived by her wife Wanda Reeves Henson; sister Barbara Ley, Chauncey, Ohio; daughter Andie Gibbs (and life wife Terri Valenti), Ovett, Mississippi; daughter Terri Elliott, Omaha, Nebraska; son Robin Gibbs (and spouse Ann Miller), Jemison, Alabama; son Arthur Elliott, Reno, Nevada; grandchildren Vannessa Gibbs, Britney Elliott, Arthur Elliott, III, (and Brittney & Arthur's mother Leslie Melancon), Alexandria Elliott; greatgrandchildren Leighton Albin, Alyssa Albin; numerous nieces, nephews and self-identified 'children'.

Establishing an Award of Valor. At this PreConference we will discuss and vote on establishing the *Brenda and Wanda Henson Adult Education Award of Valor*. The *Brenda and Wanda Henson Adult Education Award of Valor* will acknowledge an individual or individuals who demonstrate valor by redressing discrimination—based on gender expression and/or sexual orientation—through adult, continuing, or community education.

We will discuss whether we should approach the AERC Steering Committee to confer this award at the Regularly Scheduled AERC Business Luncheon.

PART II – 1993 through 2003 History

In 2003 I presented at the AERC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies PreConference the paper, “Working memory at AERC: A Queer welcome ... and a Retrospective,” that appears below.

The notes above help to update the *Hidden and Displayed Presence* in the intervening half-decade.

Note: The original work presented below appeared as an ERIC document:

Hill, R. J. (2003). Working memory at AERC: A Queer welcome ... and a Retrospective. In R. J. Hill (Ed.), *Queer histories: Exploring fugitive forms of social knowledge—The First Annual LGBTQ&Allies Pre-Conference*, (June 5, 2003), pp. 11-28. San Francisco: San Francisco State University. (ERIC document CE085106)

Working Memory at AERC: A Queer Welcome... and a Retrospective

***Abstract.** This paper explores the emergence and development of research with/by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and Queer learners in the context of the Adult Education Research Conference. It is an analysis that illustrates three significant moments in AERC history during the past decade: the establishment of a caucus for sexual minorities and allies (1993), the first Pre-Conference (2003) marking a decade of LGBTQ cultural work within AERC, and the growing number of papers, starting in 1994, that include LGBTQ discourses—often in our own voices.*

Introduction

The Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) is an “annual North American conference that provides a forum for adult education researchers to share their experiences and the results of their studies with students, other researchers, and practitioners from around the world” (*About AERC*, n. d.). A review of printed AERC *Proceedings*, and an examination of ephemera, such as brochures and letters from past organizers, suggests that until 1993, adult education researchers, reporting at AERC, either had no experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or Queer (LGBTQ) communities, or elected not to share their experiences since no one mentioned LGBTQ adult learning or adult education. This is remarkable in light of the fact that, arguably, AERC represents a progressive wing of research in the field. It is a location more likely to integrate sexual orientation and gender identity than perhaps other venues (e.g., teaching conferences on adults).

Three significant moments define Queer voice and vision in the history of AERC: the formation in 1993 of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies Caucus (LGBTQ&AC), the first Queer Preconference, sponsored by LGBTQ&AC at the 46th AERC (San Francisco, 2003), and the growing number of presentations at AERC meetings since the first effort offered from a ‘gay perspective’ (Hill) in 1994. This present paper is about *working memory*—it is an investigation of the processes and politics of actively

re/membering the place of sexual minorities in adult education research by exploring these three moments.

Education often reproduces injustice, reinforces stereotypes, and promotes violence. It can be a tool for social regulation and the reproduction of the (biased) *status quo*. In a society rife with homophobia, heterosexual privilege, and the hegemony of “straight” culture, education is often complicit with processes that marginalize sexual minorities. Historically, adult education has been no exception (Hill, 1995). On the other hand, education can transform individuals and build more just societies for sexual outlaws—something that members of the AERC community have taken up as part of their social justice agenda in the past decade.

The First Queer Preconference

Queer histories: Exploring fugitive forms of social knowledge, an historic ‘first’ Queer Preconference for AERC, marks the 10th anniversary of the LGBTQ&A Caucus. It examines relationships at the intersections of truth/power/(fugitive)knowledge from an *international perspective*. Papers in this *Preconference Proceedings* center on what counts as knowledge, and what knowledge counts ... how Queer communities have exposed/replaced categories such as family/citizenship/democracy... how Queer communities engage in sense-making beyond the hetero/homo duality to re/constitute social difference in new and meaningful ways ... and, what international Queer communities have to offer each other/others. There are noteworthy papers that explore queer knowledge from Japan, Kosovo, Australia, Canada, Taiwan, and the United States. The diversity of topics ranges from lesbians in corporate settings, to sobriety in the ‘sobear’ community (the ‘bear scene’ is comprised of furry, full-bodied gay men). The space between these two aforementioned papers is filled with research results in areas as varied as the distribution of power in Chinese society for gay men and lesbians, campus safety for sexual minorities, a development model for ‘coming out’ in adulthood, community development for LGBTQ youth (aged twenty-five and under), and citizen- and human-rights that emerge from the intersection of peace and health education in LGBTQ communities.

The Caucus: Challenging Structures of Containment and Resisting Non-being

The account of the formation of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Allies Caucus provided here is perhaps best described as ‘fictive’—neither myth nor fiction—it is derived from an large measure oral history that will undoubtedly reemerge in the continual retelling of our events¹. It is also based on empirical and observational data but avoids causality statements. The attempt has been made to incorporate four levels of analysis: explanation, description, interpretation, and critique.

The notion of fictive history has its origins in literary criticism and the social sciences, and is well developed in Queer cultural studies of history. It looks at how identities and differences construct, and are constructed through, Queer narratives of the past (Bravman, 1997). Queer fictive history, nested in Queer theory, is a term that explores gender- and sexual-diversity through post-structural theories of identity, especially in light of the work of Michel Foucault. As Bravman states, we need a Queer approach to historiography as “a shift away from understanding lesbian and gay historical representations as literal or descriptive accounts of the past, towards reading those representations as performative sites where meanings are invented” (p. 97). Fictive does not signal a concept of

history as artificial or contrived but rather as “acknowledging the open-endedness of the historiographical undertaking where interrogations of sources on the past are recognized as being open to multiple imaginings and continual retellings” (Jackson, 2000). Abandoning the positivist notion of truth, Bove (1990) suggests that “all 'truths' are relative to the frame of reference which contains them—and 'truths' are in fact a function of these frames.” The ‘truth’ of *this* history of AERC is a function of the Queer frame of reference which contains it. Bravman reminds us, “this approach refuses both a notion of total history and a singular interpretation of any particular event, period or historical narrative” (p. 125). Meaning is invented in re/presentations of AERC’s history, not as progressive refinements, but as discontinuities in the development of ideas. The three Queer moments constitute such discontinuities.

Foucault (1972) employs a historical method that explores the incidences of interruptions, disruptions and discontinuities—in what might be presented otherwise, i.e. as the seamless web of the past. He writes that disruptions “suspend the continuous accumulation of knowledge, interrupt its slow development, and force it to enter a new time” (p. 4). In 1993, at the business luncheon of the 34th AERC (Penn State University), participants were invited by Bob Hill, a graduate student at Penn State, to form a “Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Friends Caucus.” The caucus’ “founding organizers” who gathered in 1993 were Bob, Libby Tisdell, and one supporter. Perhaps the numbers were few for the first meeting because they gathered at 7 am on a Sunday morning for breakfast and the first acts of organizing!

Verbal and *written* affirmations were received in 1993 from the outset; the AERC&AC archive also contains sporadic notes written from supporters over the past ten years that include encouraging comments. For example, in 1998, a graduate student writing from New Zealand stated, “I am a lesbian I found the pamphlet [about the LGBTQ&AC] very interesting ... I would love to be informed about what is happening ‘out there’ in this area.” The notions of “gay” and “lesbian” within the field functioned to both catalyze hopes and aspirations of some AERC members, as well as to provoke a mild backlash (sometimes dubbed “eyelash” in campy gay discourse). Regarding the former, groups such as the Caucus assist in identity formation, and allow individuals to probe the questions, “Who am I?” and “Who do I wish to be?” in the context of the adult education arena. The Caucus has allowed people to generate possible “selves,” to try-on new or emerging identities, and to confederate with other like-minded individuals and supporters. The Caucus coming together has had an impact on “straight” and “gay” people alike as it contested heterocentric privilege. Breaking down a formerly exclusionary space had its triumphs and tribulations.

After the presentation of a landmark paper, *Heterosexist discourse in adult education: A gay/lesbian critique* (Hill, 1994) at the 35th AERC (University of Tennessee), seven people attended the Caucus’ second meeting. Several of the seven circulated by the room entrance before they ventured in. During discussions, they reported fear of being “discovered” by other Conference attendees, including, according to one, faculty on their doctoral committee.

At the 1995 AERC (36th, University of Alberta), two papers appeared on the Conference program in a gay voice, and a third discussed lesbian and gay issues incidentally. About twenty people attended the LGBTQ&A Caucus. The period 1995-96 is described in an email newsletter sent to all members by Hill. In it he proposes that the Caucus use Adrienne Rich’s politics of visibility as a guiding value. Rich (1986) offered,

It takes some strength of soul, and not just individual strength, but collective understanding—to resist ... nonbeing, into which you are thrust, and to stand up demanding to be seen and heard, to make yourself visible. To claim that your experience is just as real, and normative as another can mean making yourself vulnerable. But at least you are not doing the oppressor's work, building your own closet (p, 199).

Newsletter. Many members wanted to stay in touch with LGBTQ developments in adult education. One way of accomplishing this was through a (unsuccessful) Newsletter that was sent to “members” on several occasions, but which lacked resources, including contributors and financial support. It was difficult to establish participatory practices in the Caucus. The newsletters (and memos) that were posted by mail (and email) to participants were frequently accompanied by “drafts” of fliers and announcements of future Caucus meetings for members’ comments. One letter announced that the Caucus matured significantly, providing the evidence, “Well, we’ve come of age! A few weeks ago I called the organizers of the next AERC to request formal time and place for the ‘lesbian, gay, bi- and friends Caucus’ to gather. Much to my delight, and the organizer’s credit, we were already listed on the 1995 schedule! The group grew to have a mailing list of more than 80 names of people by 1999.

In one newsletter Hill I wrote, “By 1998, after 5 years, the Caucus ... has expanded to more than 60 individuals from three continents. Long silent, the door is slowly opening to multiple gay discourses in the field of adult education. However, our story should not stop here! Our increased presence at AERC should remain strong. Those doing queer research/cultural studies that intersect with adult education are encouraged to continue presenting papers at future conferences.”

Website. The launching of the Caucus’ Website, *AERC’s Queer Space*, in 2001, hosted by the University of Georgia, and found at <http://www.arches.uga.edu/~bobhill/AERCQUEERSPACE/>, was (and continues to be) more successful than the Newsletter. One of the primary features on the Website is an extensive bibliography of published works on LGBTQ topics for adult educators.



Symposium. Group activities have varied over time. In 1998 the LGBTQ&A Caucus sponsored a major symposium (39th AERC, University of

the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, TX), titled *Taboo Terrain: Reflections on conducting adult education research in lesbian/gay/queer arenas*. Presenters included Kathleen Edwards, André Grace, Brenda and Wanda Henson, Bob Hill, and Ed Taylor. The post-symposium evaluation was completed by 40% of the fifty people who attended. They reported the following: 95% strongly agreed that the presenters were prepared and well-organized; 95% strongly agreed that the presenters effectively kept discussions focused on relevant topics; 84% strongly agreed that the presenters were considerate and responsive to participants’ needs; 84% strongly agreed that the session format was appropriate for the topic, as was the time-frame; 84% strongly agreed or agreed that the handouts were valuable; and 95%

strongly agreed or agreed that the information provided would be useful in their adult education practice. Narrative feed-back included, “I was moved, touched and inspired by the vulnerability, professional presentations and sense of love all the presenters gave to us.” “I liked the honesty, humor and passion!” “This is long over-due; should be addressed yearly.” “Enlightening. This issue is in the consciousness, why should there be fear about it? I admire the courage of the panel Adult education reaches a high plane when this gay issue is openly accepted and discussed. We are all members of the human race!” “Outstanding, challenging, and informative. Thank you!”

Cinema. The Caucus has employed cinema as a pedagogical tool on a number of occasions, screening progressive, Queer-positive, avant-garde cinema (e.g., *Nitrate Kisses*, directed by Barbara Hammer the postmodern film maker, was featured as an invited Post-Conference Session titled, *Lights out! Queer cinema and adult learning* at the 40th AERC, 1999, North Illinois University in Dekalb, IL. *Paris is Burning*, an award-winning film that fanned U.S. Congressional attacks on the National Council of the Arts was a part of the 38th AERC in 1997 at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater). The rationale for utilizing films is based on the belief that cinema is a powerful pedagogical endeavor that can produce alternative meanings for viewers’ lives. Trinh T. Minh-ha (1999) reminds us that “an image is powerful not necessarily because of anything specific it offers the viewer, but because of everything it apparently also takes away.” Queer cinema is a case in point. Film is now “Out.” It is a cultural-political tool; a moral vision of human justice and decency, and can rob heterohegemony of its central positionality. In the past few decades film culture has been characterized by reconfigurations in the relations between sexual orientation and representation. Identity, otherness and difference have been contested by independent Queer film makers (and to a much lesser extent by mainstream Hollywood). Hegemonic trans-historical film canons are increasingly decentered and destabilized, as LGBTQ discourses move from the margins to the center. For the community of sexual outlaws, this shifting terrain helps to fulfill one of John Dewey’s notions of progressive education: to gain command of oneself so as to make positive social use of one’s powers and abilities (Dewey, 1994).

Speakers. Sponsoring speakers at Caucus meetings has been the single most uniform event. Brenda and Wanda Henson, famed for resistance to hostile attacks at Camp Sister Spirit, the Feminist Folk Education and Retreat Center in Ovett, MS, spoke at the 37th AERC in 1996 (University of South Florida, Tampa).

In addition to the film, *Paris is Burning*, the Caucus sponsored a discussion at the 38th AERC, 1997, at the University of Oklahoma, Stillwater, titled, *Creating a narrative space for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered and Transsexual discourses in adult education*.

Pat Gonser, a lesbian nurse, discussed educational issues and her “Out” status at the 39th AERC, 1998, San Antonio (University of the Incarnate Word). Her presentation was titled, *Journey into freedom: A coming-out narrative of a closeted dyke in the academy*.

In 1999 (40th AERC, North Illinois University, Dekalb) the Caucus hosted a panel presentation, *Adult*



education for citizenship: The role of Queer cultural studies and fugitive knowledge, organized by André Grace, with invited panelists, Mechthild Hart (who could not attend due to an accident), Bob Hill, Juanita Johnson-Bailey, and Libby Tisdell.

The legislative hero, Svend Robinson (pictured on the preceding page) Canada's openly-gay Member of Parliament, addressed members at the 41st AERC, 2000 (University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada) on policy-making for social justice—see insert for a photo of Svend.

During the 42nd AERC at Michigan State University, East Lansing in (2001), members of a local grassroots lesbian organization shared their experiences operating a lesbian press and building a land-based community for women.

Caucus Mission

Today the LGBTQ&A Caucus remains an active and vital part of AERC. It is open to anyone who attends the annual Conference gatherings. Its purpose continues to be:

- To promote the improvement of research and evaluation in adult education on topics of importance to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer communities
- To foster professional collaboration among persons who promote research, conduct research or utilize research findings on topics related to LGBT and Queer issues in the field of adult education
- To offer support, collegiality, and a safe space for dialogue to LGBTQ faculty and students at the AERC and beyond
- Through a Mentoring Project, offer feedback to students interested in presenting or publishing papers in the field of adult education on topics related to LGBTQ research, practice or theory
- To support an Internet site for scholars and cultural workers in the field of adult education's intersection with LGBTQ interests

Backlash (Eyelash!)

While much support for the Caucus was generated by many AERC members, some opposition also arose during its history. In 1993, backlash was reported by Caucus members to include shunning and menacing glares from others. It also took expression at a 1993 feminist affinity-group meeting when someone suggested a chapter for the (hotly debated) next edition of the *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education*. The proposition was to include a paper in the new book on “radical heterosexuality!” At this meeting, one woman who specialized in African American studies was heard saying, “Why are people discussing lesbians in a feminist group, there’s nothing feminine about lesbians!” Lesbian scholarship was largely invisible to the field. Unrecognized was the long-standing place of womenloving-women in communities of the black diaspora (see Wekker, 1993).

After the Caucus organizing meeting was announced at the business luncheon in 1993, Hill was approached by a number of people who provided such comments as, “The time just isn’t right yet for this sort of thing,” and “Slow down, you’re moving too hard, too fast—like Clintonⁱⁱ and the military,” and, “We need time to accept your ideas!” One person offered, “You really ought to think about what you hope to achieve, given that you’re a graduate student and don’t even have a job, let alone tenure!” Arguments of social usefulness, such as the time isn’t right, or people are not ready, have common elements of

neutralization, denial, and avoidance expressed in previous civil rights struggles. In a similar vein, colleagues of James Sears, founder of the special interest group for research on lesbian and gay studies within the American Educational Research Association, referring to gay research, were overheard saying, “Why does he insist on pursuing *that!*” On the other side of the debate, however, people defended the idea of an LGBTQ Caucus, and encouraged members to not lose heart.

A few incidents that exemplify policing the borders by resistant folks, while not illustrating the majority of experiences, must be recorded in order to capture the complex nature of what has occurred. Briefly, at one conference the host committee refused to allow the partner of an invited presenter to attend the Caucus meeting because she had not paid the AERC registration fee; fortunately, the Steering Committee intervened. At another conference, during the opening plenary session while reading from the program, an AERC host organizer introduced the affinity groups. When he came to the LGBTQ&AC he bypassed it. Before the assembly disbanded, Hill rose to call attention to the oversight, which was corrected with apology. At another AERC, the host committee listed the group as “the Social Action Caucus”—seemingly avoiding, where ever possible, tabooed words such as “gay” or “lesbian” (another example that illustrates how these words function is more powerful than what they may mean). At one Conference, a Caucus session was placed concurrent with the presentation of a major figure in adult education who would attract large numbers of Conference attendees. Hill was confidentially informed by a member of the host institution that this was, in fact, done by design to prevent the Caucus from “standing out too much” (exact quote). At another AERC, the Caucus was the only meeting *not* held in the complex of buildings where all other AERC venues occurred. Rather, it was placed a 15 minute walk across campus from the Conference site. Finally, one year, Caucus brochures were posted to a host committee for insertion into the registration packets. Upon (early) arrival at the registration desk, the absence of this brochure was noted. Literally no one involved in organizing the AERC claimed to know anything about them. After suggesting that the Caucus would re-photocopy the flier, and would request assistance in inserting them into the registration packets, one member of the host team stood up and walked directly to a cabinet where the brochures were “discovered.” Surprise!

Queer Words: A Conspectus of Papers at AERC

Conference *Proceedings* from 1993-2002 were critically reviewed for this paper, through an Internet searchⁱⁱⁱ of the AERC Website (found at <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/proceed.htm>). Owing to on-line availability, only Abstracts were accessed for the years 1993-1996; entire papers were examined for the years 1997-2002. Nine key words were included in the search. The findings were: *Sexual orientation* (The total number of papers containing this word, in the 10 year period, was N=36), *Gay* (N=25), *Lesbian* (N=23), *Queer* (N=10), *Homophobia* (N=8), *Heterosexism* (N=6), *Transgender* (N=6), *Bisexual* (N=2), and *Transsexual* (N=2). Two categories were observed: papers that included LGBTQ discourse/es as one of many identity-based topics, and papers that specifically focused on LGBTQ adult learning or education. The distinction is not reported in this analysis.

Author citations for the nine key words break out in the following way:

- *Sexual orientation* (Tisdell & Taylor, 1995; Hansman, 1997; Lawrence, 1997; Tisdell & Perry, 1997; Baptiste, 1998; Chapman, 1998; Chapman & Sork, 1998; Ziegahn, 1998; Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Hansman, 1999; Howell, 1999; Tisdell, 1999; Butterwick & Selman, 2000; Caffarella, et al., [Symposium], 2000; Edwards & Usher, 2000; Egan, 2000; Gouthro & Grace, 2000; Hill, 2000; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000; Pyrch, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Stalker, 2000; Taylor, Tisdell, & Hanley, 2000; Tenant, 2000; Tisdell, 2000; Barlas, 2001; Grace & Hill, 2001; Hansman, 2001; Kaufmann, 2001; Tisdell, Tolliver, & Villa, 2001; Zukas & Malcolm, 2001; Baumgartner, 2002; Cain, 2002; Gouthro, 2002; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002; Tolliver & Tisdell, [Symposium], 2002)
- *Gay* (Boshier, 1993; Hill, 1994; Tisdell & Taylor, 1995; Archie-Booker, 1997; Brooks & Edwards, 1997; Sparks, 1997; Tisdell, 1997; Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Reeves, Merriam, & Courtenay, 1998; Brooks & Edwards, 1999; Miller, 1999; Noble, 1999; Sessions, 1999; Sosibo, 1999; Tisdell, 1999; Egan, 2000; Hill, 2000; Hunt, 2000; Newman, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Baumgartner, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Baumgartner, 2002; Grace, 2002; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002)
- *Lesbian* (Hill, 1994; Tisdell & Taylor, 1995; Resides, 1996; Archie-Booker, 1997; Brooks & Edwards, 1997; Kaufmann, 1997; Sparks, 1997; Tisdell, 1997; Ziegahn, 1998; Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 1998; Brooks & Edwards, 1999; Jones-Isley, 1999; Tisdell, 1999; Egan, 2000; Hill, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Tisdell, 2000; West, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Grace, 2002; Low, 2002; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002)
- *Queer* (Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Tisdell, 1999; Brooks & Edwards, 1999; Egan, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Hill, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Cain, 2002; Grace, 2002; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002)
- *Homophobia* (Boshier, 1993; Edwards, et al., 1998 [Symposium]; Guy, et al., 1998; Tisdell, 1999; Egan, 2000; Rosenwasser, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Grace 2002)
- *Heterosexism* (Hill, 1994; Edwards, et al., 1998 [Symposium]; Tisdell, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Clark, 2002; Grace, 2002)
- *Transgender* (Hill, 1994; Edwards, et al., 1998 [Symposium]; Brooks & Edwards, 1999; Hill, 2000; Grace & Hill, 2001; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002)
- *Bisexual* (Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Tisdell et al., [Hill in Symposium], 2002)
- *Transsexual* (Edwards, et al., [Symposium], 1998; Hill, 2000)

On the surface at least, the data would suggest that for some reason/s, researchers in the past decade have articulated words like “sexual orientation,” “gay,” and “lesbian” 10 to 15 more times than words such as “transgender,” “bisexual,” and “transsexual.” Such observations

beg the question, “Why?” A possible answer might be found in post-modern notions of Queer cultural studies where it is argued that how words are *defined* is considerably less significant than how they *function*, or are deployed. AERC is a performative space, and it is essential to comprehend how this performance is enacted. For example, understanding what Boshier meant when he first employed the word “gay” in 1993, while consequential, is secondary to knowing the many ways that the term *functioned* in the context of AERC in that, and in subsequent years. Like wise, the first use of the term “Queer” in the 1998 Symposium, *Tabooed Terrain*, has functioned to construct identities and differences, as well as to be constructed by those identities, as can be seen in the subsequent ways the term has been deployed by authors of ensuing papers.

It is interesting to examine the number of papers that appeared, by year, employing at least one of the nine key search words. The growing number of papers in a Queer voice since 1994 is apparent.

The following formation results from this analytical perspective:

- 1993 (N=1; Boshier)
- 1994 (N=1; Hill)—note, in a letter to Hill, David Little, University of Regina, wrote, “I think your presentation, as [Roger] Boshier remarked, was history in the making. To actually hear the gay voice in formal discourse made things I knew about the interanimation of voices ... more real than ever. Thank you for that” (letter, May 27, 1994).
- 1995 (N=1; Tisdell & Taylor—note, there were 3 papers this year in a gay voice, but only one was located using the search parameters for this study, pointing to the incomplete nature of this analysis)
- 1996 (N=1; Resides)
- 1997 (N=8; Archie-Booker; Brooks & Edwards; Hansman; Kaufmann; Lawrence; Sparks; Tisdell; and Tisdell & Perry)
- 1998 (N=8; Baptiste; Chapman; Chapman & Sork; Edwards, et al., [Symposium]; Guy, et al.; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero; Reeves, Merriam, & Courtenay; and Ziegahn)
- 1999 (N=9; Brooks & Edwards; Hansman; Howell; Jones-Isley; Miller; Noble; Sessions; Sosibo; and Tisdell)
- 2000 (N=16; Butterwick & Selman; Caffarella, et al., [Symposium]; Edwards & Usher; Egan; Gouthro & Grace; Hill; Hunt; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero; Newman; Pyrch; Rosenwasser; Stalker; Tenant; Tisdell; Taylor, Tisdell, & Hanley; and West)
- 2001 (N=10; Barlas; Baumgartner; Cain; Clark; Grace; Grace & Hill; Hansman; Kaufmann; Tisdell, Tolliver, & Villa; and Zukas & Malcolm)
- 2002 (N=7; Baumgartner; Cain; Gouthro; Grace; Low; Tisdell, et al., [Hill in Symposium]; Tolliver & Tisdell, [Symposium]).

As can be seen, a key search word was found once (N=1) each year for the three year period 1993-1996. There was a gradual increase during 1997 (N=8) to 2000 (N=16) and a decrease in 2001/2002 (N=10/7). While it is too early to determine a downward trend, attention should be paid during the next few years to see if the downturn in 2001/2002 is a trend toward fewer papers in the *Proceedings*. The decrease could be interpreted as a result of less favorable vetting of LGBTQ papers by the Steering Committee (which this author can attest

was not the case since I was on the selection team); fewer research studies in this arena; or fewer submission of LGBTQ research papers to this particular conference.

A (Very) Brief Conclusion—Because the Road Leads Onward!

An analysis such as this, “Queering our History, Gayzing AERC,” while perhaps not methodologically rigorous, has heuristic value in helping to explore past accomplishments and to look forward to future agendas. It is evident that there has been an accumulation of knowledge surrounding LGBTQ topics over the past decade, since the terms “gay” and “homophobia” were first articulated by Boshier (1993), and Hill’s (1994) first full treatment of LGBTQ issues in adult education. In the future, may all comrades who attend to LGBTQ matters be inundated with multiple imaginings and continual retelling of our lives, our impacts, and our transformations.

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i Individuals are welcomed to contact the author with additional information, personal memories, comments on the thoughts and motivations behind their actions, and the details of emergence of LGBTQ discourses at AERCs. This “history” on the Caucus’ tenth anniversary should be a dynamic and living history.

ii In January, 1993, President Clinton stated, "The issue is whether men and women who can and have served with real distinction should be excluded from military service solely on the basis of their status, and I believe they should not" (Truscott, 1993). He then proposed July 15, 1993 as the deadline to draft an order allowing gay men and women to serve in the military. Public and Congressional opposition was so great that this directive was rescinded before it could be implemented.

iii Thanks are due JuSung Jun, University of Georgia, for providing, in large part, the key word search data that are reported here.

Appendix 1

AERC LGBTQ-Themed References Chronological Listing (1994-2005) [Not alphabetical]

By Chris Parker

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Appendix 2

Catalogue of Queer PreConference Papers 2003 - 2008

YEAR	LOCATION	AUTHOR	TITLE
2003	San Francisco State	John Egan jegan@mac.com	Sobears: Finding Space, Seeking Community
		Robert Lee bobjt42@yahoo.com.tw	Gay and Lesbian Issues in Chinese Social Context
		N. Y. Gulley nygulley@hotmail.com	So You Know About the Queers: What Campus Environment Studies Say About Queer Knowledge Production
		Julie Gedro Julie.Gedro@esc.edu	How Lesbians Learn to Negotiate the Heterosexism of Corporate America
		Kathleen P. King Kpking@fordham.edu	Changing from the Inside Out: Transformative Learning and the Development of GLBT Sexual Identities among Adults
		André P. Grace & Kristopher Wells andre.grace@ualberta.ca kris.wells@ualberta.ca	Building a Queer Cultural Change Network in Alberta through Community and University Initiatives
		Robert C. Mizzi robert_mizzi@hotmail.com	In Solidarity: Using Community Health Education to build Queer Peace in Kosovo and Japan
2004	Univ. of Victoria	André P. Grace andre.grace@ualberta.ca	Surviving Queer, Queering Survival: The Resilience of Queer
		Bob Hill bobhill@uga.edu	Going Global: Internationalizing

			LGBTQ Resilience and Inclusion
		Thomas Bettinger Tbettinger@aol.com	Lesbians & Gays at Midlife: An Unpicked Harvest
		Suzanne Gallagher & Tonette S. Rocco Sue.Gallagher@ucpsouthflorida.org roccot@fiu.edu	Just City life: Creating a Safe Place for GLBT in Urban Education
		Kimberly L. Hlina grrlchild@shaw.ca	(Border)Crossing Boundaries: An Intersectional Analysis of Youth Fiction in British Colombia Schools
		Kristopher Wells kris.wells@ualberta.ca	Diverse Threads in Social Fabrics: Building Queer Communities of Hope and Resilience Through Arts-Based Education
		Marg Moore mrmoore@rogers.com	<u>Round Table.</u> Becoming an Ally: Power, Privilege and Practices in Explorations of Women's Sexual and Gender Identity
		Francisco Ibanez-Carrasco, Peter Hall, & Lynette Signola Francisco@bcpwa.org peterh@bcpwa.org	<u>Round Table.</u> Positive Prevention: (Dis)Mounting Missionary Positions
2005	Univ. of Georgia	André P. Grace & Kristopher Wells andre.grace@ualberta.ca kris.wells@ualberta.ca	Out Is In: Building a Unive Community Network in Edmonton to Empower LGBTQ&A Youth through Informed Socialization and Informal Educational Initia
		Julie Gedro Julie.Gedro@esc.edu	Queering the Curriculum
		David Ruffolo OISE?	Queering Educational Rese in the Academy:

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Debra Davis

Disturbing Binary Sexualiti
Academic Research

Queer Space and Adult
Education:
Gay Men's Sociocultural
Experiences in Adult Learn

Being Straight as a Lifestyl
Choice:
Deconstructing Heterosexis
Privilege and Marginalizing

“Homo's hoeven niet minde
moedig te zijn dan andere
mensen”—
Homosexuals aren't any les
courageous than other peop
Reflections on Anti-Gay
Moral/izing Past and
Present

Georgia on Our Minds:
Matters of Presence and
Place for LGBTQ&A
Participants at AERC

I Am Allowed To Be Who
I Am (Or Will Become)—
A Narrative Journey
Through The First Year
Of A Doctoral Program
(Or Whom I Found
Whence There)

Out of the Closet and Into
the Basement:
Institutional
Heterosexism at a
Southwestern University

Separation, Subjugation,
Intoxication, and
Isolation: Lesbians and
Fences

Workshop. *Putting the*

2007

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Kathleen P. King (Paper published

"T" in LGB

What's it Like to Be
Queer Here?
[PUBLISHED]*

GLBTQ Allies on
Campus: Do They Have
an Institutional Role?

Masculinity's Messiness:
Straight Men
Constructing Ally
Identities

Lesbians: Identifying,
Facing, and Navigating
the Double Bind of Sexual
Orientation and Gender
in Organizational Settings
[PUBLISHED]*

The Quest for a Queer
Inclusive Cultural Ethics:
Setting Direction for
Teachers' Pre-service and
Continuing Professional
Development
[PUBLISHED]*

Fear. . .Friend or Foe?
Re-Shaping How Non-
Heterosexual Parents
Communicate with Their
Children's Teacher

Difficult Dilemmas: The
Meaning and Dynamics of
Out in the Classroom
[PUBLISHED]*

Straight Privilege and
Moral/izing: Issues in
Career Development
[PUBLISHED]*

A Transformative

2008

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Learning Perspective of
Continuing
Sexual Identity
Development in the
Workplace
[PUBLISHED]*

Band Queer: Lesbian and
Gay Marching and
Symphonic Bands and
Emotional Influences on
Transformative Learning
Experiences for Adults

Framing the
Issue/Framing the
Question: Inquiry,
Inclusion, Advocacy, or
Hostility?

Luncheon Key Note

Hidden and Displayed:
Queer Memory Work
Revisited

For Better, for
Worse, or Not at
All: Re-
conceptualizing the
Meaning of Family
and Valuing All
Families

On the Origin of Families:
A Metaphorical
Darwinian Perspective of
LGBTQ Families

Adult Learning in the
Queer Nation: A
Foucauldian Analysis
of Educational
Strategies for Social
Change

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**Educational
Considerations for the
Workplace Family
Regarding Transgender
Persons**

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**Lesbianism as the
Practice of Freedom**

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**Why Heterosexual
African Americans
Should Support Same-
Gender Marriage**

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**Racist and
Homophobic Bullying
in Adulthood:
Narratives from Gay
Men of Color in
Higher Education**

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**Joining The Family:
Experiences of
Be(com)ing Ally Activists**

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**Slamming the Closet
Door and Taking
Control: Analysis of
Personal Transformation
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a Trail of
Democratization of the
Media**

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**LGBT Families and the
Episcopal Church**

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For Better, for Worse, or Not at All: Re-conceptualizing the Meaning of Family and Valuing All Families

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Keywords: LGBTQ, same-sex marriage, families of choice, family values

Abstract: The term “family values” is a hegemonic and heteronormative code used to stave off challenges to the privilege accorded “traditional” marriage to the detriment of those in other familial or relationship configurations. In contrast, “families of choice” with its key tenets of agency and intentionality, is presented as a framework to view the creation and redefinitions of diverse family structures in contemporary society.

Introduction

Although there is little agreement on what constitutes a “family,” the term itself carries great societal and cultural force. Some seek to impose “official” definitions upon a family structure limiting it to those related by blood, marriage, or adoption; whereas, to others and particularly in everyday parlance, family is often understood as any two or more people who feel emotionally committed to each other. This latter understanding deviates from the archetypal view of the “nuclear family” which approaches sacrosanct status in the American psyche, and which is deeply embedded in many social, cultural, and legal institutions. Heteronormative assumptions regarding gender roles underpin this idealized family, which consists of a legally married (biologically male) husband and a (biologically female) wife, approximately 2 children, and the obligatory dog or cat. Although a wife may work outside the home, her primary responsibility is that of taking care of the home, husband, and children; while the husband's main task is breadwinning “although he may, on occasion, deign to ‘help out’ around the house” (Bernstein & Reimann, 2001, p. 3).

This hegemonic view of what constitutes a family discounts the heterogeneity of contemporary family forms and structures. Family structures which vary from the unitary form of an intact, heterosexual, two-parent norm are judged to be inadequate— whether they be heterosexual couples who intentionally choose not to produce offspring, single-parent families, stepfamilies, or families whose members are not related by marriage, blood, or law. Immigrant families, poor families, and families of color have been the targets of criticism and cited as sources for society’s ills based on “diverse, nonconforming family organizations... [differing] from the ideal of the white, bourgeois, native-born family” (Bernstein & Reimann, 2001, p.4). However, perhaps the most forceful and vitriolic opposition is reserved for those LGBTQ individuals whose very existence is seen by some as a threat to the sanctioned heterosexual order and to society itself; and whose efforts to establish and function in healthy family units (either similar in structure to “traditional” heteronormative models, or in familial structures unrestricted by normative gender behaviors, or matters of blood relationship and legal recognition) are oftentimes strongly resisted.

A call for a return to “family values” is the chief rallying cry of this resistance. This vague term is used by various groups to represent different things. In contemporary

North America, “family values” serves most often as an ideological code among social and religious conservatives to conjure up a set of ambiguous moral beliefs specifically in response to a perception of declining morality. With the archetypical nuclear family at its core, this concept of family values emphasizes normative gender roles and behaviors, and is decidedly heteronormative and expressly homophobic. Despite their contestations to the contrary, the prescriptive imposition of this “traditional” view of family is not a panacea for the problems society faces as its most ardent demagogues have insinuated. Furthermore, “the family can no longer be an assumed institution in policy discussions, but must be an explicitly self-conscious, constantly reconsidered configuration that reflects both existing reality and collective responsibility” (Fineman, 1995, p. 236). In reality, as historian Robert Dawidoff (as cited in Sullivan, 1999, p. xii) asserts: “lesbians and gay men have always been at the heart of family life ... we have always formed families and been parents and grandparents. The notion that gay is a category apart from healthy and conventional family life is unsupportable.”

Challenges for LGBTQ Families

In the wake of heteronormativity, sexual minorities face diminished opportunities for external validation compared with their heterosexual peers. Relationships with families of origin are sometimes strained; long-term partnerships are often denigrated, and equitable benefits denied; and media representations too frequently reinforce negative and misleading stereotypes. Historically, heteronormative assumptions and prescriptions for what is considered “valued” has constrained the ability and opportunities for sexual minorities to form relationships in an intentional way (Lehr, 1999). Furthermore, normal avenues of social support for key life events, such as celebrating anniversaries or upon the death of a partner, are often muted at best. This begs the following question: in a society that so privileges heterosexual marriage, what sorts of relationships are developed by those for whom such a union is either impractical or illogical—such as is the case for many sexual minorities?

Given such a backdrop, many sexual minorities develop and rely on deep and enduring social networks and friendships, frequently invoking notions of “family” or “community” to describe their individual social support networks, or the broader spectrum of sexual minorities. Because of limited opportunities to share in the full spectrum of socially and culturally sanctioned institutions and events, friendships within the gay community may take on a different significance than in the larger society (Bettinger, 2007; Connell, 1995). These social networks and friendships—these “families”—fulfill a wide range of needs. Importantly, they provide the learning and support required to develop the resilience and sense of self to challenge heterosexist assumptions, and to face life hurdles due to a sexually marginalized status.

Before proceeding further, two important caveats must be stated. First is a caution against adopting a perspective that views LGBTQ families as necessarily and fundamentally different from more “traditional” families which are established by law or biology; such a viewpoint would serve to perpetuate and reify a binary between heterosexual as normal and natural, and LGBTQ as deviant and unnatural. The second caveat is equally important: in discussing the range of social and/or familial options (regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression), any implicit a priori assumption that “couple-hood” is paramount should be cast aside. Notions that one *must*

be married, or at least partnered, in order to live a happy and meaningful life are by-products of heteronormativity and patriarchy.

Families of Choice

One key aspect of the lived experiences of many people, regardless of sexual orientation/identity or gender identity/expression, is love as expressed in a primary relationship with one or a series of partners. Through the tandem effects of heteronormativity and heterosexism, such relationships among sexual minorities who choose to enter into them are undervalued at best, and far too commonly belittled and castigated as “immoral” or “sinful.” Furthermore, LGBTQ people are largely disenfranchised from the “normal” societal and cultural sanctions surrounding their partnerships. However, as sexual minorities deepen in self-knowledge and self-acceptance by casting aside heteronormative notions that do not fit with their lived experiences, many come to question, and ultimately challenge, such socially conditioned messages and demand to make their own determinations as to what and who constitutes family. As a result, a broader range of relationship patterns may be seen among sexual minorities.

Based on Westin’s (1991) anthropological interpretation of kinship networks, the concept of *families of choice* articulates the sentiment and spirit that serve as the foundation of familial structures and patterns established by many LGBTQ families (as well as other “non-traditional” families). This concept of choosing our own families, which was defined in opposition to the biological family, “proved attractive in part because it reintroduces agency and subjective sense of making culture into lesbian and gay social organization... chosen families introduce something rather novel into kinship relations ... by grouping friends with lovers and children within a single cultural domain” (p. 135-136). Echoing this sense of agency, Wilson (2007) states that the families of choice concept “explicitly celebrates acts of choice—the emancipation from the biological model and the individual efforts to foster caring, mutually responsible committed relationships within a recognizable network of intimates” (p. 53). Indeed, in a somewhat ironic fashion given the zeal of those who seek to protect and preserve the “traditional” family, one of the coded ways LGBTQ people have of acknowledging other similarly situated people is to ask if they “are family;” and “in this referencing, we hint at a utopian construction of ‘families of choice’ that is not bound by definitions of blood, of law, of sex, of gender” (Walters, 2001, p. 354). This notion of choice in determining families and relationships combined with less reliance on socio-legal legitimation has led to the broadening of family configurations and patterns seen in contemporary society. Since deciding who will be part of one’s family is a highly personal and intentional endeavor, it offers the “opportunity to recreate and invent the family as pluralistic phenomena without the tyranny of normativity and compulsory heterosexuality... [and] without the power dynamics, hierarchical assumptions, rigid gender stereotypes, and roles customary to traditional heteropatriarchal biological families” (Goss, 1997, p.13).

For many, but by no means all, sexual minorities, same-sex marriage or “gay marriage” is seen as essential and an absolute threshold that much be achieved in the ongoing struggle for equity and justice. The exploitation of this topic as a wedge issue in politics demonstrates its potent capacity to polarize and divide people—both those within the LGBTQ community and those in the broader society. While some see gay marriage

as the ultimate measure of equity and full citizenship, others condemn it as evil through venomous and vitriolic rhetoric. Many in the LGBTQ community are dismayed at the amount of attention the issue of gay marriage receives, and express serious reservations regarding its diversion of attention from other concerns. While there is certainly widespread support among sexual minorities for efforts to obtain or expand same-sex partner benefits to be on par with those of heterosexually married couples, there is a lack of agreement as to whether this should be pursued as a separate and distinct goal in and of itself; or subsumed under a broader goal of full marriage. Furthermore, there is no cohesive set of approaches and strategies to achieve the goal in either case.

Towards a Vision of Valuing All Families

Polikoff (2008) aligns with those who maintain that arguments made in support of same-sex marriage risk reversing, rather than advancing, progress for diverse families; that is, civil rights victories of marriage for gay and lesbian couples “may come at the expense of law reforms benefiting a wider range of families” (p. 98). She argues that marriage is “the wrong dividing line” (p. 126). Merely extending the economic and legal benefits of legally sanctioned marriage to same-sex couples would continue to privilege marriage as the only worthy form of family, while discounting those in other significant and meaningful family structures. Recognition (both societal and legal) of creative, if controversial, reconfigurations of relationships would mitigate the privilege of “marriage” per se; and allow for “a flexible menu of choices for forms of household and partnership recognition open to all citizens, depending on specific and varying needs” (Duggan, 2004, p. 2).

A 2006 document entitled *Beyond Same-Sex Marriage: A New Strategic Vision For All Our Families and Relationships* has been signed by numerous LGBTQ and allied activists, scholars, educators, writers, artists, journalists, and community organizers who see opposition to same-sex marriage as:

Part of a broader pro-marriage, “family values” agenda that includes abstinence-only sex education, stringent divorce laws, coercive marriage promotion policies directed toward women on welfare, and attacks on reproductive freedom.

Moreover, a thirty-year political assault on the social safety net has left households with more burdens and constraints and fewer resources.

(<http://www.beyondmarriage.org/>)

Furthermore, they point out that household and family diversity is already the norm. Regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, a majority of people do not live in traditional nuclear families and thus stand to gain from increased recognition of various forms of household and family diversity beyond one-size-fits-all marriage. Common examples include: (a) single parent households; (b) senior citizens living together; (c) blended and extended families; (d) children being raised in multiple households or by unmarried parents; (e) adult children living with and caring for their parents; (f) grandparents who are the primary caregivers to their grandchildren; (g) close friends or siblings living in non-conjugal relationships and serving as each other’s primary support and caregivers; (h) households in which there is more than one conjugal partner; and (i) care-giving relationships that provide support to those living with extended illness such as HIV/AIDS.

The signatories to this document seek to offer a new vision of governmental and private institutional recognition of “diverse kinds of partnerships, households, kinship relationships and families ... to move beyond the narrow confines of marriage politics as they exist in the United States today” (p. 1). This vision includes a flexible set of economic benefits and options regardless of sexual orientation, race, gender/gender identity, class, or citizenship status. Inherent in this vision is an interdependent, global community in which “people of every racial, gender and sexual identity, in the United States and throughout the world, who are working day-to-day--often in harsh political and economic circumstances” (p. 1) stand together:

to resist the structural violence of poverty, racism, misogyny, war, and repression, and to build an unshakeable foundation of social and economic justice for all, from which authentic peace and recognition of global human rights can at long last emerge (p. 1).

Conclusion

Fineman (1995) proposes that to be a just society, all families must be treated with respect and concern. Progress towards such a vision cannot be achieved without challenging societal assumptions regarding sexual minorities, and the cherished representations of the heterosexual nuclear family which solidify privileges for some while denying the reality of most.

Resisting the efforts of those who would regulate language to perpetuate oppression, and exposing the rhetoric of family values as heteronormative and homophobic discourse helps to engender “specific opportunities for the voices of the disempowered to be heard, recorded, published, and circulated” (Halperin, 1995, p. 52). This is an important point as the hegemony masqueraded by the call for family values disadvantages more than sexual minorities. Without closely examining systemic privileges around issues such as race/ethnicity, gender, class, language, ability, age, and other social locations, the risk increases that only certain types of families will be added to those deemed worthy. The concept of families of choice, with its key components of agency and intentionality to choose or recreate family configurations valid to a particular set of circumstances, would seem to be a pertinent and useful framework for such examination.

Diverse family configurations and their implications for learning, living, and loving—as well as for society at large-- is an area that is ripe for exploration; and one relevant to adult education given the field’s longstanding symbiotic relationship with social justice and equity. The invitation has been extended; involvement of adult educators will help move us forward to the day when ALL families are not only valued, but celebrated as well.

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On the Origin of Families: A Metaphorical Darwinian Perspective of LGBTQ Families

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“Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It’s not!”-Dr. Seuss

Abstract: This paper proposes that ideas within Charles Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* can serve as a metaphor for the evolution of LGBTQ families. In 1860, Darwin’s revolutionary theory withstood many attacks while challenging humans to see themselves and their world from a new vantage point. In 2008, many LGBTQ families face attack while challenging others view of family as well as the role and place of families in society.

Introduction

With the publication in 1860 of a single text, *On the Origin of Species*, Charles Darwin catapulted debates about evolutionary biology as well as accepted religious beliefs to the forefront of society. The book is a culmination of Darwin’s observations and scientific notes he recorded while participating in an around the world British scientific expedition aboard the H.M.S. Beagle in the 1830s.

Darwin, anticipating scientific challenges to his theory of evolution as well as possessing awareness that his ideas would prompt religious controversy, took almost thirty years to carefully consider all sides of such arguments. During the years between the expedition and the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin gathered scientific evidence and support for his groundbreaking theory, meticulously researching and testing each construct. The book ultimately sold out six editions during his lifetime. Immediately after publication, representatives from the fields of science, philosophy and religion voiced opposing reviews.

At the time, many in religious communities disputed Darwin’s revolutionary ideas, some accusing him of blasphemy and religious heresy. The focal point of religious arguments against Darwin’s ideas centered on his concept of evolution (all life stems from a common ancestor), and specifically the idea of natural selection (positive genetic changes are preserved and passed to future generations while negative genetic changes are not). Thus, species possessing negative traits are disadvantaged and gradually eliminated, leaving only those species that are most advantaged to compete in the wild. This simple yet complex idea contradicted most religious doctrine and scientific thinking of the time.

Darwin’s groundbreaking theory, though it has no scientifically proven relationship to LGBTQ families, can be a vivid metaphor for the evolution of such families in our society. Three integral components of his theory of evolution are: (a) populations evolve slowly, (b) variation within species occurs naturally, and (c) the ability to adapt to one’s environment is paramount for survival. Similarly, slowly, over generations, LGBTQ families have visibly evolved in greater numbers. Consequently, such visible emergence of LGBTQ families helps to broaden the understanding of what “family” is and can be. Additionally, many LGBTQ families face daunting environmental challenges.

Populations Evolve Slowly

Natural selection acts only by taking advantage of slight successive variations; she can never take a great and sudden leap, but must advance by short and sure, though slow steps (Darwin, 1860).

Although LGBTQ families, like all families have existed since the beginning of time, it is only recently that they have become more visible in society. The evolution of such ‘out’ families has been gradual, culminating with what many have called the “gayby boom” of the 1990’s. Although the U. S. Census Bureau doesn’t keep statistics on the number of LGBTQ families and their children, one only has to look at his or her neighborhood, relatives, co-workers, local schools, and places of worship to find such an evolutionary family.

It should be no surprise that the evolution of such families, unlike most heterosexual families, requires extended time and tremendous planning for each aspect from conception to the daily living in a family unit that for the most part is not supported by society. In the past, laws have not protected relationships between LGBTQ adults and certainly not any parent-child relationship within such families. But, in the last few years, some states and municipalities along with a number of Fortune 500 companies have slowly begun to recognize the evolution of such families and the significance of providing protections to all members of those families.

Variations Within Species Occur Naturally

[I] can see no limit to the amount of change, to the beauty and infinite complexity of the co-adaptions between all organic beings, one with another and with their physical conditions of life, which may be effected in the long course of time by nature’s power of selection (Darwin, 1860).

The concept of a family (mother, father, and offspring) has changed considerably in the last ten to twenty years. But, the inherent values that comprise a family (love, respect, support) have not changed. Hence, today one may experience families who vary in composition from past norms yet still embrace traditional core values.

Because more and more people who identify as LGBTQ are forming families, it is only natural that the manner in which such families are created varies. Children may become members of such families by adoption, previous marriages, surrogates, artificial insemination, and so forth. Regardless of the process, the heightened visibility of LGBTQ families in society are beginning to be seen as common a variation of family as those headed by single parents, grandparents, and parents of different races and ethnicities.

So, even though the traditional, time-honored family portrait may vary and look different today than it has in the past, if one were to inquire beyond the quaintly arranged smiling faces in the photo, they would come to the conclusion that families are essentially the same as they have always been; social units held together for survival by love and respect and trust.

Ability to Adapt to One’s Environment is Paramount for Survival

There is a frequently recurring struggle for existence, it follows that any being, if it vary however slightly in any manner profitable to itself, under the complex and

sometimes varying conditions of life, will have a better chance of surviving, and thus be naturally selected (Darwin, 1860).

Most LGBTQ people are experts at surviving within the boundaries of modern hegemonic society. Having been discriminated against our entire lifetime, we've learned how to stealthily navigate the social and legal obstacles of our heterosexually designed surroundings. We tend to have a heightened (maybe closeted) sense of survival in this discriminatory world and are able to adapt quite often without losing our individuality. Those who are LGBTQ live everyday having to advocate for themselves because there are few legal protections or social services in place for the unique needs of LGBTQ people.

However, hopefully, with the introduction of Civil Unions in some states, a loosening of adoption laws, greater numbers of insurance plans offering in-vitro services and companies providing equal benefits for all families, (many, a result of the increased number of visible LGBTQ families and the variations of family they bring to the proverbial table of life), it seems that the table may be in the process of turning and the heterosexual world order beginning to recognize and adapt to our LGBTQ needs, albeit slowly, very slowly.

Conclusion

It may be naïve to believe, at least in this current political climate, but through the slowly evolving visibility of the unique varieties of LGBTQ families who are conquering the struggle to live in an often hostile society and exposing themselves to their relatives, neighbors, co-workers, local school districts, and places of worship, society is becoming richer and consequently being forced to engage in learning the value in valuing the diversity of LGBTQ families. In time, these small changes will eventually build upon one another and help to alter the overriding stereotypes LGBTQ families face on a daily basis. When this evolution nears completion, we will all become better citizens of the world.

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Adult Learning in the Queer Nation: A Foucauldian Analysis of Educational Strategies for Social Change

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Abstract: This article explores how the Queer Nation movement of the early 1990s deployed a Foucauldian reading of power-relations to create educational interventions that allowed relatively small numbers of activists to affect powerful social change.

In 1990, there were virtually no “out” celebrities; there were no effective treatments for HIV/AIDS; gay bashing was common, with no public outcry; and consensual private adult homosexual activity was illegal in many states. Anti-gay sentiment was open and loud, and bigots felt free to condemn gay men and lesbians personally and in the press or at public events. What has now come to be labeled as the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Queer (“LGBTQ”) community responded with a national groundswell, including the formation of dispersed chapters of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (“ACT-UP”), which focused on HIV-related issues, and of Queer Nation (QN), which focused on LGBTQ civil rights, empowerment in the face of oppression, and visibility. These groups’ educational interventions, based upon a Foucauldian reading of power-relations (Halperin, 1995), allowed a relatively small number of activists to challenge dominant discourses and to facilitate rapid social change.

For a number of reasons, 1990 was a turning point. *The Advocate*, a national gay rights magazine, declared 1990 “The Year of the Queer,” as the gay civil rights movement erupted in protest all over the nation (Shilts, 1991). The great and beloved gay gadfly, Larry Kramer (1989), had for years urged LGBTQ people to become activists, but the movement was galvanized at last by an anonymous pamphlet circulated at gay pride in New York city in June of 1990 (Anonymous Queers, 1990/2008). A new type of activism emerged which Shilts, writing contemporaneously, described as one that

... struck suddenly and tumultuously after a dolorous and drowsy decade in which the homosexual rights agenda was overwhelmed by the preoccupation with morbidity and mortality. Its tenor is both humorous and insolent; its rhetoric careens between the trenchant and the fatuous. Its purpose is to be, beyond all else, insurgent, even menacing (Shilts, 1991).

I experienced firsthand this groundswell and many of the events that led to great cultural and legal breakthroughs in the 1990s, after which overt expression of homophobia and heterosexism became, in many circles, less acceptable. The world changed in the middle 1990s. People living with HIV stopped dying as rapidly, because there were finally more effective treatments. Many of the more overt expressions of heterosexist privilege were mitigated, as most Americans, confronted with their prejudice, seemed to learn that it was not okay to, for examples, gloat over the deaths of people with AIDS or to claim that God wanted gay people to die horrible deaths.

I was not an educator then, but was rather an anthropologist (Walker, 1993). I cannot pretend any sort of objectivity on that period in American history, since I was involved in many activist protests and events in my home territories of Atlanta, Augusta, and especially Athens, Georgia. I am now a witness to a history that was never written down, quite intentionally, because activists in the early 1990s genuinely believed that straight people would and could kill, imprison, or otherwise harm those that could be identified as Queer Nationalists, even if we never did anything illegal in any of our protests (which, for most activists such as myself, was true.) In the words of Anonymous Queers (1990/2008):

How can I tell you. How can I convince you, brother, sister that your life is in danger: That everyday you wake up alive, relatively happy, and a functioning human being, you are committing a rebellious act. You as an alive and functioning queer are a revolutionary.

There is nothing on this planet that validates, protects or encourages your existence. It is a miracle you are standing here reading these words. You should by all rights be dead. Don't be fooled, straight people own the world and the only reason you have been spared is you're smart, lucky or a fighter.

The wave of activism that shook the nation in the early 1990s was singularly effective in the history of the movement for full civil rights for LGBTQ people. The goals of QN-- more visibility, repeal of the sodomy laws, out LGBTQ celebrities, and more nuanced portrayals of gay peoples' lives in the media—have all, to some degree, since been achieved. Something barely dared imagined in 1990—gay marriage—has appeared in one state and many foreign nations. As both a witness and an adult educator, I am now prepared to theoretically unpack the reasons that this period of activism was so effective. This article examines how Foucault's notions of power and social change, filtered from the academy and into the street, informed QN activities and allowed a relatively small number of activists to affect striking social change. LGBTQ academics did the analysis, and the people on the street took "high theory" ideas and made them into potent instruments for social change.

Foucauldian Theory and Analysis of Heterosexist Power

Foucault's notion of power is very different from traditional analyses of power relations, in which one group has one power and the other does not. Foucault posited power as omnipresent, and as found only in its application:

Power is not something that is acquired, seized or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away; power is exercised from innumerable points, in the interplay of nonegalitarian and mobile relations... There is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and the ruled at the root of power relations and serving as a general matrix... (Foucault, 1976/1990, p. 94).

Thus, under a Foucauldian reading of power, power exists not in hypothetical structures but in concrete applications. "[F]or Foucault, unlike liberationists, resistance is inseparable from power rather than being opposed to it" (Sullivan, 2003, p. 42). The proper question for an advocate of social change is not "What is the nature of power?" but rather "How does power function to maintain these oppressive circumstances?" Understanding power, and the manner in which power functions, can inform activists, who can act within their own spheres of life and

experience, because power is everywhere. “Between techniques of knowledge and strategies of power, there is no exteriority...” (Foucault, 1976/1990, p. 98).

If social power, including the power that oppresses and the power that resists, are found in their application, the expressions of power can be described in terms of streams of discourse or, more simply, discourses. There was and is a heterosexist discourse which proclaims, through its various speakers, artifacts and channels, that only relationships between biologically-defined men and women are socially acceptable; and there are discourses opposed to that heterosexism, in which LGBTQ people live their lives and resist in their speech and behavior. Social power, then, expresses its self in specific discourses, which Foucault labeled “tactically polyvalent”:

[W]e must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable... [W]e must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies (Foucault, 1976/1990, p. 100).

In Marxist theory, there is often a singular oppressor, a bourgeois class which dictates how the world will be. For Foucault, there is no single speaker, and, because discourse arises in contested relations, the statements within a stream of discourse are less coherent. A careful Foucauldian reading of a discourse, such as the discourse of heterosexism, can allow those who understand the contested power relations to effectively challenge that discourse, by targeting points of weakness within oppressive discourses.

Halperin (1995) provided a succinct analysis of the sort of Foucauldian reading of heterosexist discourse that QN activists undertook. First, activists looked at how LGBTQ people are described by heterosexist speakers: “The homosexual” is simultaneously “(1) a social misfit, (2) an unnatural monster or freak, (3) a moral failure, and (4) a sexual pervert” (Halperin, p. 46). This analysis is useful, if only to provide categories for refuting the dominant discourse and for describing inconsistencies in such statements of prejudice. An activist might introduce him or herself as queer in order to refute these descriptions within specific sets of power relations, under the theory that it is easier to demonize gay people if one believes one has never met a gay person. It’s harder to imagine that gay people are social misfits and freaks when one’s co-worker or brother or mail carrier or social worker is out and proud of LGBTQ culture.

The real meat of the analysis is found, however, not in the analysis of the categories that oppress, but in the analysis of the categories that empower. Halperin described the “crucially *empowering* incoherence” of the category “heterosexual” as follows (p. 46). Heterosexuality is defined as:

(1) a social norm, (2) a perfectly natural condition into which everyone is born and everyone grows up, if no catastrophic accident interferes with normal, healthy development, (3) a highly laudable accomplishment that one is entitled to take pride in and for which one deserves no small amount of personal and social credit, and (4) a frighteningly unstable and precarious state that can easily be overthrown—by such contingent events as coming into contact with a gay or lesbian role model, being seduced by a member of the same sex during adolescence, hearing homosexuality spoken of too often, or having a gay man as a primary school teacher (Halperin, 1995, pp. 46-47).

This last factor is key for understanding how social activists can change the culture for the better. This is the point of leverage that allows a few activists to change the world: do the hard work of social theory, figure out the way that the oppressive discourses function, and target their most

absurd aspect. When heterosexism is violent, this violence is based upon fear, and that at least part of that fear is that, if LGBTQ people are not stopped, everyone will become gay.

The proposition is ludicrous. If homosexuality were contagious, we would all be already gay. And, while the most prejudiced in any society are not well known for their intelligence, oppressive discourses that are so incoherent, irrational and absurd are easily challenged and overthrown if a few activists are willing to take the calculated risk of the possible the violent incoherence of bigots. The strategy is simple: Identify the discursive fault line. Engage in educational activities that prove to anybody willing to think that, for example, talking with a gay person or seeing two women kiss will not make you gay. Win over the thinking majority, and then the speakers of prejudice will be the marginalized actors—not for what they are, but for what they do and say that is socially unacceptable and wrong.

Educational Strategies in the Queer Nation

The QN movement was the move from object to subject—LGBTQ people moved from being objects of derision, hatred and oppressions to subjects who defied their oppressors and described their own lives, intentionally and often theatrically. In locating the “Pressure points, the fault lines, the most advantageous sites within the political economy of heterosexist/homophobic discourses for disrupting and resisting it” (Halperin, 1995, p. 48), street activists and academics alike deployed strategies including appropriation, resignification, exposure, and demystification. That is, QN activists engaged in planned “actions” informed by strategies that included:

“Shop In’s” Under slogans including “Don’t revolutionize, accessorize,” activists wearing QN t-shirts and holding hands would descend upon the “apotheosis of heterosexual culture, the suburban shopping mall” (Shilts, 1991) to, quite simply, go shopping. The money used might be stamped with “you have just interacted with a lesbian,” but, other than the t-shirts, buttons and the large groups of lesbians communally sorting through lingerie, these events were simply an opportunity to go shopping with friends.

“Queer Ins.” Sometimes, an action involved simply showing up, en masse, at some place where queer folk were generally not out. A bar that catered primarily to heterosexuals might, for example, find that virtually all of its patrons on a certain night were wearing QN t-shirts and pink triangles.

Letters to the Editor: When a speaker of prejudice was outspoken against LGBTQ people and rights, QN activists convened and wrote letters. Because QN activists were generally quite literate and willing to be sarcastic and funny, these letters were often published.

Picketing: When a local newspaper published an editorial urging, say, the “reeducation” of LGBTQ people into heterosexuals, various chapters of QN, often joined by ACT-UP and even local gay churches, would march. Offenders received the chant of “Shame! Shame! Shame!” from hundreds of voices, and media covered these events.

Targeted Protests: Some acts of prejudice required specific, recurring counter-discourse. When a local restaurant chain in Georgia fired employees for being gay and lesbian, large numbers of QN activists converged, over many months, to sit in booths together, order one order of communal French fries, pray and sing “We shall overcome.”

Kiss-Ins. If heterosexist speakers really distinguished themselves with their anti-gay rhetoric, they might have to watch a dozen or so same-sex couples kiss one another on their doorstep.

Protective Patrols. Gay bashing resulted in patrols of “brothers and sisters” who would call the police at the first sign of trouble on their walkie-talkies. While these were not vigilante groups, many QN members did undertake martial arts training, and patrol members were dressed to intimidate—often in the usual QN black t-shirt and combat boots, which were a sort of uniform.

In addition to these concrete sorts of “actions,” the theoretical move from object (of hatred) to subject (who builds community, who protects “brothers and sisters”) also entailed a willingness to resist oppression directly. This, too, was a theoretical move. If power is diffuse and is found in its application, it is deployed by specific actors. It is therefore possible to trace hate back to its source and to challenge that actor directly. Many LGBTQ people in the days before 1990 had been socialized to accept oppression, even violent oppression, without complaint. A story from “Queers Read This” is illustrative:

Tompkins Square Park, Labor Day. At an annual outdoor concert/drag show, a group of gay men were harassed by teens carrying sticks. In the midst of thousands of gay men and lesbians, these straight boys beat two gay men to the ground, then stood around triumphantly laughing amongst themselves. The emcee was alerted and warned the crowd from the stage, “You girls be careful. When you dress up it drives the boys crazy,” as if it were a practical joke inspired by what the victims were wearing rather than a pointed attack on anyone and everyone at that event. (Anonymous Queers, 1990/2008).

After QN, LGBTQ people were less likely to stand passively by, and more likely to defend themselves. But what if the oppressor was actually an LGBTQ person? Closeted individuals were in many instances the worst of the oppressors, as they channeled their apparent self-loathing into acts that damaged the LGBTQ community. Closeted news anchors who followed every gay-positive story with a “counterpoint” from an extremist conservative and closeted politicians who worked against the community’s interests were numbered among the worst offenders. For some QN activists, who had read the many stories about high suicide rates among LGBTQ youth and attributed that mortality rate to the fact that most such youths thought they were alone in the world, privileged celebrities who remained closeted despite their fortune and success were also oppressors of a more silent sort.

Two other types of actions by QN grew out of this new unwillingness to accept oppression from closeted homosexuals. The first was a new refusal to accept such people at community events or functions. If you worked against gay and lesbian interests as a politician on Capitol Hill and then went to your regular gay bar in the evening, after 1990 somebody would probably throw a drink on you. If you were a celebrity who denied in the press that you were gay and you then showed up at an LGBTQ venue, you would be told that you were not welcome. The second—and the more controversial activity—was “outing.” In “outing,” homosexuals who worked actively against LGBTQ interests in politics had their sexuality openly discussed in the queer press. This was a sort of atomic bomb of activism, threatened far more often than delivered. Ironically, “outing” has often been used to characterize the entire QN movement, even though the practice was never designed to be used against, say, small town closeted lesbians who might lose their livelihood if exposed. The few “outings” that occurred were, more properly, educational events aimed at a select few individuals with money and power: if you had political power, and you were a closeted homosexual, you could no longer advocate for anti-gay

laws without risking exposure.

**Conclusion: “AN ARMY OF LOVERS CANNOT LOSE”
(Anonymous Queers, 1990/2008)**

The QN movement represented a decentralized, national groundswell of resistance against heterosexism and oppression of LGBTQ peoples. Anger and loss motivated activists to take risks and to agitate for social change. After QN, the prophecy of the sisters in the section titled “Anger” of “Queers Read This” proved true:

The strong sisters told the brothers that there were two important things to remember about the coming revolutions, the first is that we will get our asses kicked. The second, is that we will win. (Anonymous Queers, 1990/2008).

If the world has changed, it is at least in part because Foucauldian theory worked. Power is immanent, and resistance is possible at every level. QN vanished in the middle 1990s as many of its activists perished of AIDS and, as society became more accepting, queer rage cooled. But that’s okay: all movement demands were, to some degree, met. Many LGBTQ celebrities are out now. There is less violence. The sodomy law is no more. In a few places, queer folk can actually get married. The world is a little less oppressive. We won.

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Educational Considerations for the Workplace Family Regarding Transgender Persons

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Keywords: transgender, adult education

Abstract: This paper explores my experience with a transgender co-worker. It is a journey of facing my own prejudices and learning how to advocate about LGBTQ issues with other faculty, staff, and students for more inclusive work environments.

Men are supposed to use their own bathrooms. Period. End of discussion. I'm not going into the bathroom to adjust my pantyhose and have him in there doing the same thing. He still has his man-equipment even if he does wear a dress... you can't change the inside just because you disguise the outside!

The Issue is Presented

There came a day at the community college when I heard rumblings of campus wide meetings by departments about Jim (pseudonym). Speculation was high and the words used were homosexual, transsexual, and cross-dressing. In my own oblivious, often naïve way and with my concentration focused on teaching classes, I paid little attention. Those words held little, if any, strong feelings for me; I had no particular interest exploring with co-workers their own feelings or expressing mine. The environment within our department wasn't one that invited conversations about marginalized or disenfranchised individuals or groups and I had learned to "fly under the radar" as another co-worker and I used to describe it regarding my student-centered teaching methods; I wasn't anxious to bring up topics that would draw attention to me. Therefore, I went into the meeting with little expectations about its content.

Jim had arranged for his psychologist to conduct the meetings. She explained that through some intensive therapy, Jim had come to admit and understand that he felt more like a woman and was beginning the process of changing his gender to fit or align with his identity. The room was quiet. Although I had come with my department, I ended up sitting alone. I actually noticed that many of us were not sitting by each other. That was unusual. Frequently we would all sit together and even take over rows of seats so we could be close. As I later reflected I wonder if that was significant; I wondered if it perhaps was a glimpse of how uncomfortable this topic was for us. The psychologist continued to explain some of Jim's personal history, his clinical depression, his process through therapy, and his ultimate decision to change genders. Jim would take a month off work and return as Jill (pseudonym). These are the things I remember the psychologist saying:

- Most transgender persons suffer from depression and have a high suicide rate.
- The transition for a man involved living for a year as a woman before consideration of any surgery.

- Most individuals had an opposite gender name for themselves and it generally started with the same letter(s) as their current gender name. For example, Mark might call himself Martha or vice versa.
- The psychologist admitted that Jim was not a particularly likable person and if we didn't like him as a man, we probably wouldn't like him any better as a woman.

The psychologist disclosed this with his full permission and support. In fact, Jim was paying her to conduct these meetings with all the departments at the college. I remember thinking that was very smart and strategic of him. The psychologist encouraged us to ask questions and there were many. Some were about Jim, some about the gender transition process, and some were about sexual orientation. Of course, staff asked the real questions outside of the meeting in the break room, whispered in the hallways, and passionately expressed in the privacy of offices behind closed doors.

Bigotry: Personal and Systemic

Bigotry is the stubborn and determined attachment to one's own belief and opinions, with an intolerance of beliefs in direct opposition. Prejudice is the decision one makes out of her or his own bigotry without critical or complete examination of the issue, action, or behavior in question. Discrimination is action taken to exclude those who are different, whose beliefs and actions are incongruent with our own. The “ism” is the *system* or dominant group's practices, both formal (intentional, for example legal) and informal (what everyone does) that make possible and condone the discrimination of the dominant group members' prejudices and bigotries toward the subordinate individual or group. It became obvious as I listened to my coworkers discuss the meeting during the walk back to our department, that Jim faced a tremendous amount of bigotry, disdain, and ugliness. The acting president of the college assured us that Jim had the full cooperation of the administration as he underwent this transition.

My current research involves the examination of race and in studying that, I have come to understand that those in the dominant racial group (White) often want to view themselves and have others view them as enlightened, progressive, and non-discriminating members of the White race (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001) even when they are not. These individuals use comments like, “I'm not racist because I have Black friends” as a way of *proving* or establishing this enlightenment. I found myself saying similar things inside my own head as I walked back from the meeting and in the days that followed. *“I can handle this better than the rest of these individuals; look at all the gay friends I have, look at how I champion gay and lesbian teenagers.” “I'm not surprised by this; I saw a documentary about a man who dressed as a woman in a small community in New Mexico long before I worked here. I'm handling this much better than everyone else; I'm much more experienced/enlightened.” “I am not shocked by this, look how well I cope with differences in my classroom, I have people in wheel chairs, some who are hearing impaired.”* It took me the better part of the week before I began to understand that this was challenging me at the root of my own bigotries, in the private secret places that hold my prejudices.

I am self critical and reflective to the point that I make most people around me uncomfortable; I have faced many of my own demons as a member of many privileged groups, such as race (White), sexual orientation (heterosexual), able-bodiedness, and religious affiliation. As I listened to this inner narrative, I recognized the verbiage as that of one who is trying to assert a particular position that is really covering up the uncertainty or vulnerability of a hidden position. I want to be enlightened, an ally, I do not want to be part of those who actively and

consciously perpetuate conditions that marginalize others. Suddenly faced with the possibility or more accurately, the reality that I was this kind of person, I began to ask myself some questions. What I was afraid of, what was I trying to cover up, and what was my hidden position? Before I could critically examine the rhetoric I was hearing from others, I first had to do this reflective work with myself. As a researcher and writer, I did what I normally do; I started reading and investigating about transgender identity issues and writing my thoughts down. Consistent with all struggles I have faced about my other prejudices, I ask myself, what if this person taught my child ... what would be my issues, what would I be afraid of? What if this were my sister, brother, or best friend, how would I feel ... would I love them less? Would I think differently if this were a woman wanting to be a man? These questions help me identify what I am scared of and ultimately bring me to compassion and inclusion. This work was no different and I ultimately faced and worked through the initial layers of prejudice regarding transgender persons. I came to appreciate and respect the possible issues transgender people face as identified in the materials I had read and watched.

The co-workers within my department were not so self-reflective. I have not experienced open racist discourse; I have experienced subtle comments but not blatant hate speech. I have not been around members of the Ku Klux Klan or Aryan Nation where I imagine (stereotypically) the exchange of racist comments and discourse is frequent. This was the first time I had heard others openly and continuously discuss their intolerance toward an individual based on identity. Conversation in the break room, offices, and meetings often centered on how we were going to deal with having a transgender person in our midst; jokes were told, snide remarks were made, slurs were tolerated, and put downs were rampant. I often felt bombarded with this anywhere in the department I went. The systemic (more than one individual) expression of bigotry and prejudice was overwhelming to me. It paralyzed me and I didn't react. I was new in my own understanding and had not yet figured out how to support this individual or interrupt the dialogue.

The Perils and Pitfalls of Advocacy

The issue that was most important to me was the depression and suicidal tendencies of which the psychologist spoke. We had just lost our college president; I believe this was a suicide mitigated by her clinical depression. One mantra that repeated in my head was that if Jim was happier and less depressed as Jill, then it was worth me getting over my discomfort or any other issues. Life was too precious, a lesson I re-learned with the death of our college president. My first step in the process of support was to speak with Jill when she returned to campus. Since I had done a good bit of my own work while she was away, I spoke with her on her first day back. Interestingly I never really liked Jim and often would avoid him, for example, I'd walk down a different hallway or not go in the break room if I heard him talking. He was often difficult to relate to because he made jokes I didn't really "get." Therefore, walking into Jill's office when she returned to work was the first time I had ever initiated a conversation. Although I am one to rehearse any tough conversation or confrontation, I had not rehearsed this. I had a vague idea of what I wanted to communicate but did not think it through. It was evident that I was unprepared because I stumbled around and was hesitant in my style. I don't remember much of what I said, but I did ask her how I could be supportive. That opened up the dialogue, which led to many such conversations between us. The psychologist was right; I didn't find myself liking Jill anymore than I did Jim, although I thought it my responsibility to assist in the education of nontransgendered persons to create a more inclusive, less hostile work environment.

Having thought through some of my own issues and gotten some direction from Jill about how to support her, it became clear to me what work lay ahead with my co-workers. There were many tactics I used, none of which I think were very successful although I learned a great deal from them. The first one I tried was listening intently as co-workers talked and then rationally and logically pointing out the prejudices and offensiveness I could identify in their statements. All I got back was defensive posturing. That got tiresome and I found that co-workers would seek me out to engage me just to argue their position; it almost seemed like it was sport to them. This appeared to reinforce their prejudice rather than dismantle or deconstruct it. The second one I tried was to disagree assertively or strongly, with whatever prejudice or bigotry I could identify. I went on the offensive. This tended to end the conversation and rarely would that person engage with me again about the topic. The next one was to be silent; of course, that did nothing but encourage more talking. I think my silence was perceived as agreement. I came to understand that I had no model of how to be an advocate or ally. There was no manual to read on how to respond; it was a lonely fight.

The most successful strategy happened by accident when I was observing a co-worker's class. Although the administration had informed the faculty and staff about what was happening with Jill, the students were not informed. The administration had directed instructors not to initiate discussion about it and said if students had questions, they could talk with deans and the acting president. When Jill and I discussed how I could be supportive, one thing she asked was that I talk with students openly about her transition. The students in the class I was observing had been making snide remarks about "the he/she" when one student finally asked directly why Jill was wearing make up and dresses. The instructor froze; she said that she would get someone to talk with the class about it. I spoke up and engaged the students. I asked them what they had observed. I asked them how they felt about their observations and what they thought was going on. Most understood what Jill was doing although many lacked the word transgender and instead labeled her a transvestite. Some said it really didn't bother them and others said it was disgusting. I asked them what they thought all people deserved. This took some discussion because they weren't sure what I meant, but we ended up with an agreement that all people deserved respect and happiness. I added that I thought all people deserved love, happiness, peace, and friendship and to live without harassment. Then I asked them to define and give examples of harassment. They could easily describe both overt and covert forms of harassment and the examples ranged from being held at gun point to the name calling and put downs some had engaged in at the beginning of class. This reflection allowed students to identify their motivations and goals or desires in how they wanted to both be treated, and to treat others. Although a short conversation, I began to make connections of my various strategies and some things about advocacy.

I was more comfortable and assertive with students than I was with co-workers. I seemed more confident when in a position of power and authority than when I was a peer. When couched as education, I had more energy for the discussion. I was more forgiving of students and their remarks than I was of co-workers. I tended to get angry with co-workers and tended to be more accepting of students even though both were saying exactly the same things. I was more prepared for the discussion with the students than with peers; I trusted the process of discussion and dialogue. I seemed to intuitively know what to say as I led the discussion with learners. It seemed that with peers there was always a meeting to go to, a phone call to return, or a class to teach. With students, I knew I had time; they were captive.

The Organization's Response

In the beginning, Jill had the full support of the administration. I think that was really that, Jill had the full support of the recently deceased president but after her death, the support began to falter. The acting president went forward with the meetings that Jill had set up for her psychologist to conduct and was clear about the treatment (policies) of Jill upon her return. The most contentious policy was the use of the women's bathroom. Jill was in a small department on campus, employing only herself and a support position. She had a small suite of offices (three) in the same building as my department. That meant that she would use our women's bathroom. The staff in my department were extremely concerned about this and asked for a meeting with the acting president to discuss it. Our director presented those concerns in the meeting. The acting president told us that Jill would have the use of any woman's bathroom on campus. Many faculty and staff argued aggressively that this was unfair to them and that, as women, they were being unfairly burdened. I said two things in that meeting. I asked at one point if this conversation about the use of bathrooms was a decision or a discussion. The acting president made it clear this was a decision that the former president had already made and promised to Jill and there was no room for any amendment to that decision. After hearing that, I turned to the rest of my co-workers and said that I was confident that if Jill understood that there was this level of discomfort, she would likely seek the single, unisex facilities in other buildings. That comment got no response and it appeared to have no effect on the group. The discussion continued with the concerns repeated many times in many different ways. In the end, as the acting president said in response to my question, Jill was to be treated as any other woman on campus, including the right to use any women's bathroom.

In her book on transgender policies in the workplace, Weiss (2007) acknowledges that bathrooms and dressing rooms are often a difficult issue in the workplace. She acknowledges that women often voice the fear that "someone [might] just pretend to ... have a female gender identity, but they do so falsely in order to obtain sexual gratification from the presence of females" (p. 16). Although this was not what my co-workers were afraid of, the women at my college were definitely afraid of how this would affect their own privacy, which is consistent with what issues Weiss discusses should be included in her chapter on organizations' gender transition plans. In addition to bathrooms and dressing rooms, she identifies "dress codes, identification and records changes, and health benefits" (p. 15). Because she had negotiated her transition before our college president died, she had many of these issues protected in writing. Her job, however, was not.

In the months following Jill's return to work, the college underwent a National search for a new president. Within four months of her return, the College Board hired a new president. Within four months of his arrival, the new president eliminated Jill's department. Interestingly this was the Department of Continuing Education of a Midwestern community college. Some would argue that it is one of the most vital departments of community colleges, particularly rural ones. Two full time positions were affected, Jill and the support position. The college was able to transfer the support position but Jill was offered no lateral moves. Employment discrimination is one of the most critical issues confronting transgender persons (Bean, 2003). A year after her transition began, she was no longer employed and was unable to find work in the following six months.

Implications for Work “Families”

Work relationships often resemble or are analogous to intimate relationships between siblings, lovers, parents, and other extended family members. There is gossip, name calling, bickering, disagreements, rivalries, deep friendships, championing, and altruism. As I think about the implications for work families, I think of the ways in which I was ill prepared. These are:

- Communication with peers – I alternated between silence, anger, and empathy; none of which felt successful, although I was unsure what successful meant.
- Negotiating directives that were inconsistent with my pedagogical practices – being told to not address what was happening with students and if students addressed it, have someone else come into my class to respond.
- Finding others who were like minded – I often felt as if I was the only one willing to set limits on the name calling, gossip, and disrespect given to Jill.
- Harassment takes many forms – as I avoided contact with my co-workers I realized that I did not want to have to listen to the constant obsession about Jill; it became a hostile work environment for me, too.

I kept coming back to the fact that I didn’t have models for any of this; I’d not heard any stories of resistance or survival regarding transgender persons. I wonder, then if diversity trainings should include role playing the communication between and of different opinions, researching how others have handled disrespectful, hurtful comments, and “calling out” co-workers specific to transgender identity. Additional possibilities are the incorporation of narratives and counter-narratives for modeling resistance and solidarity; both have been effective in anti-racist work and education (Bell, 1992; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, 2000). Finally, perhaps there should be inclusion of the moral and ethical considerations one has to ponder when choosing between the policies of institutions and the practices of one’s heart.

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Lesbianism as the Practice of Freedom

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Keywords: *Lesbianism, feminist psychology, single-hood, women's studies*

Abstract: While being a lesbian presents obvious challenges because lesbians face interlocking systems of sexism and heterosexism, being a lesbian also presents opportunities to live relatively free of societal expectations of couple-hood. This paper will theorize from the literature that lesbians have the opportunity to transgress and transcend societal expectations of “compulsory couple-hood” (adapted from Rich, 1980). However, the paper will also highlight the absence of exploration in Adult Education and related fields of *single* lesbianism. The paper is framed by Gedro’s theory of how lesbians have learned to negotiate the heterosexism of corporate America, as well as feminist psychology.

Introduction

Lesbianism challenges existing power relations of male domination and heterosexual ubiquity. Lesbians are doubly oppressed: They face sexual orientation stigma as well as gender marginalization. Being a lesbian means living at cross currents with the societal expectations of a traditional female role. It presents an exciting chance to “make it up as you go along” (Gedro, 2000, p. 50). While lesbians are stereotyped as androgynous, resilient, and non-emotional (Gedro), those stereotypes have a potentially emancipatory quality to them. That is, because lesbians exist at the margins of society by resisting heteronormative behavior, that means that they have the opportunity to live intentional, creative, non-conventional lives, free from socially constructed expectations such as marriage and family. Lesbians’ social lives do not typically include male partners, and their lifestyles are highly stigmatized (Wayment & Peplau, 1995).

Freire (2006), who claimed that “education as the practice of freedom—as opposed to education as the practice of domination” (p. 81), provides the impetus for my argument that Adult Education can validate single lesbians through research and publications that focus on them from a strength based position. Being single can be a choice, and it can be wonderful. There is a burgeoning literature within Psychology that acknowledges the possibility that a person can be single and self-actualizing. The current dearth of material related to single lesbians reinforces for them, in a curiously paradoxical way, the expectations for marriage and marriage laid upon heterosexual women.

Single lesbians do not have resources or materials that help them imagine varieties of living, free and happy, other than within the context of a couple. The exclusion of possibilities represents a bastardized version of Adrienne Rich’s “compulsory heterosexuality” (p. 489, in Reynolds & Wetherell, 2003). It is hard to imagine a responsible and logical argument against the notion that happiness could include living free from addiction, free from unfulfilled romantic expectations, fulfilled by one’s career, and satisfied with an alternative or even unorthodox family structure. However, there is little to no literature that discusses studies that have been done or theory building that has been developed that examines the experiences of *single and happy* lesbians. The field of Adult Education should address the paucity of exploration around

single lesbians—a minority within a minority-- and it should provide voice and visibility to lesbians who live outside of a norm of couple-hood, which is appropriated from the heterosexual patriarchy.

Current research and the literature on lesbians tend to focus on *deficit* models of lesbian life and experiences. For example, Kelly and Parsons (2007) discovered that young lesbians are the group most likely to abuse prescription drugs. Park and Hughes (2007) learned that lesbians are a “population at risk for alcohol-consumption related health problems” (p. 362). Gedro (2006) wrote and presented at this Pre-Conference about lesbianism and alcoholism as a co-occurring and under-discussed phenomenon. Gruskin, Byrne, Kools, and Althschuler (2006) warned about “consequences of frequenting the lesbian bar” (p. 103). Tuel and Russell (1998) studied self-esteem and depression among battered women, comparing lesbian and heterosexual women’s experiences. The research focused on lesbians that is strength-based tends to discuss lesbian parents and the issues that ensue as a result of lesbians having children, adopting children, and raising children. This research privileges certain forms of lesbian life, and marginalizes alternatives, such as intentional single-hood.

Literature Review

Single Lesbians: Invisible within Adult Education

1. In terms of Adult Education, the paucity of research, discussion or resources provided by the field reflects the continued invisibility of lesbian life. Although lesbianism represents an opportunity to live a truly creative life, free from societal expectations, the paucity of exploration of alternative family structures helps to reproduce the social order. Monogamy and preoccupation with how to either obtain the means of insemination or how to adopt pervades current literature. There is little to no evidence that scholars across the disciplines related to emancipation, such as Adult Education, Psychology, and Sociology, have considered ways to examine multiple and alternative ways for lesbians to (de) construct their familial lives.

Using Psych Info, Ebsco Host, Proquest, Sage, and Eric, I searched “lesbian AND family,” “lesbian AND relationship,” with the aspiration of locating research conducted on *alternative* inventions of lesbian life. The results garnered articles related to adoption, insemination, parenting, or other topics that subsumed lesbians into the general LGBT population. I conducted a keyword search of “single AND lesbian” of Academic Search Premier, MasterFILE Premier, Business Source Complete, Alt HealthWatch, Communication & Mass Media Complete, Professional Development Collection, CINAHL Plus with Full Text, SocINDEX with Full Text, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, EconLit with Full Text, Education Research Complete, which resulted in 93 entries. The themes of those results related to sperm donation, adoption, same sex couples, gay marriage, lesbian motherhood, and in-vitro fertilization. There *was not one article* that dealt with the topic of being a single lesbian.

Choice-fully Single Lesbians: Invisible within Popular Press

Popular press tends to reflect a consistent privileging of lesbian couple-hood. A search of “single lesbian” on Amazon.com yields results of books, music, and other materials related to lesbian parenting, lesbian weight loss, lesbian conception, and a book that even directly suggests that being single is a deficiency: “If I’m so wonderful, why am I still single?” (Page, 2002). The privileging of lesbian coupling and establishing traditional notions of family marginalizes lesbians who cannot or do not want to find a “permanent partner” (Berzon, 2004).

The relations of lesbians reflect Foucault's observation that "the relations of sex gave rise in every society to a deployment of alliance: a system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions" (1978, p. 106). The preoccupation with fixation and marriage is reproduced by the current research and writing about lesbians. The questions that the research repeatedly seems to ask are: When will a lesbian couple have the same rights and privileges to marry? When will a lesbian couple have access to couples and family therapy, so that they can work out their "problems" and live the iconoclastic American dream of permanent partnership and sexual monogamy? What are the various ways that lesbians can become parents? There is no research that gives credence to the idea that it is possible for a lesbian to live in a truly creative way, and consider "alternative lifestyles" such as serial monogamy, celibacy, or multiple partners.

The privileging of the binary form of lesbian life partnering: fixed, stable, financially, emotionally, and sexually closed and intertwined—reproduces the social order and suppresses the freedom that is possible for lesbians. Just as heterosexuality "naturalizes itself through setting up certain illusions of continuity between sex, gender, and desire" (Butler, in Carlin & DeGrazia, 2004, p. 366), the focus of Adult Education research and related disciplines that study sexual orientation limits the imagination of the inquisitor, and stabilizes notions of family for lesbians.

Single lesbians: Feminist Psychology and Marriage and Family Therapy as Proxy

The fields of Psychology and Marriage and Family Therapy have begun to explore the life trajectories and experiences of single women. Even though the focus on heterosexual women highlights the invisibility and marginalization of lesbians, there are potential insights that can be extended to lesbians. Reynolds and Wetherell (2003) studied how women negotiate a single identity. In that study, they established four "interpretative repertoires" (p. 497) of singleness: (a) Singleness as personal deficit; (b) Singleness as social exclusion; (c) Singleness as independence and choice; and (d) Singleness as self-actualization and achievement. McDill, Hall, and Turell (2006) posited "marriage remains the most prevalent norm for women in most cultures" (p. 38). Research shows that many lesbians are in "committed dyadic relationships and that lesbian couples are similar to heterosexual couples in measures of love and relationship quality" (Wayment & Peplau, 1995, p. 1190).

There is no evidence in the literature in Adult Education or in the literature related to Adult Education, that there are alternative ways of constructing family for lesbians. The dominant paradigm for lesbian life is couple-hood. The primary difference between heterosexual couple-hood and lesbian couple-hood is that lesbians, in all but one state in the United States, cannot officially marry. According to the Human Rights Campaign: "Currently, same-sex couples are entitled to all of the state-level rights and benefits of marriage in Massachusetts." (Human Rights Campaign, 2008).

Conclusion and Implications

Borrowing from the notion that family therapists should understand the issues of singleness so that they can assist single adults (Lewis & Moon, 1997), Adult Education should explore lesbian singleness as a *choice*. The ubiquity of material related to helping lesbians understand how to create families comprised of partner and adopted or insemination-created children only reinforces the hetero-normative patriarchy, and minimizes the imaginative and the creative potential for lesbian life. When the literature begins to examine and provide alternative conceptualizations of living joyful, successful, and well-adjusted lives – whether or not coupled

in a monogamous relationship—there will be an exciting opportunity for lesbians to live freely. There will be less “desperation in the singles’ bar” (Felder, Henley, & Frey, 1979) and more lesbians living free from anxiety, depression, low functioning, alcohol abuse, and repressive patriarchy.

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Why Heterosexual African Americans Should Support Same-Gender Marriage

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Abstract: For many heterosexual African Americans, same-gender marriage is not at the top of the list of important social concerns in our communities. However, it should be. As an African American, heterosexual female college professor who teaches social justice courses, I believe it is in the Black community's best interest to support legislation for same-gender marriage.

African American Resistance to Same-Gender Marriage

The civil rights movement is etched in our collective memory as a sacred and inspired movement. When same-gender marriage comes up in class discussions or social settings with African Americans, inevitably someone will state that it is offensive for gays and lesbians to compare their struggle for marriage equality to our struggles for civil rights (Carbado, 2000; Gallagher, 1997; McCarthy, 2006). The argument is that African Americans were fighting for the basic civil rights we were entitled to under the law: the right to vote, equal access to public facilities, and equal access to employment, education, and housing. We demanded the rights that White Americans freely enjoyed but we were denied for so long.

We saw civil rights as access to equal treatment under the law for basic freedoms. Marriage equality for gays and lesbians seems trivial to some when juxtaposed with the civil rights African Americans were denied. It is not surprising that there is some resentment to the gay rights/civil rights comparison. The gay rights movement and the fight for same-gender marriage are seen by many African Americans as a White movement. Unfortunately, this sentiment fails to acknowledge that African Americans are among the gays and lesbians who are demanding marriage equality. It seems insensitive to equate African Americans' struggle for civil rights to what many of us perceive as an unnecessary, frivolous demand made by predominantly White, middle-class men and women. The argument here is that White gays and lesbians have always enjoyed the privileges associated with being White in the United States along with the civil rights that came with those privileges, the same privileges that racism denied African Americans.

We rarely see African American gay and lesbian couples on television or quoted in the print media when same-gender marriage or anti-gay discrimination is discussed. It makes sense that many of us would define same-gender marriage as a White issue, despite the fact that most of us know a gay or lesbian African American. We have failed to see how African American communities will benefit from same-gender marriage.

Benefit: Increased Financial and Emotional Security for African American Children and Parents

Same-gender marriage will financially benefit African American children and families more than Whites because African American gays and lesbians are more likely to be parents than

their White counterparts. According to the 2000 Census, there were close to 85,000 Black or African American same-sex couples in the United States, a significant number of which had Black children residing in the household. Black female same-sex households are nearly twice as likely as White female same-sex couples to have children in their households. Black male same-sex households are almost twice as likely to parent children as White male same-sex households (Dang & Frazer, 2004).

The right to marriage would offer African American gay and lesbian families several financial benefits and protections that would enhance the quality of their lives. For example, in most states same-gender African American couples do not have access to their employer's family health insurance plans. Nor are they eligible for medical leave under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to care for their sick partners (Barnett, McVea Jr., & Lanier, 1993). The FMLA entitles eligible employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave of absence to care for a sick family member. Under the act, family members are defined as a spouse, child, or parent. Perhaps more importantly, employers are obligated to continue the employee's health insurance coverage and to restore the employee to his or her previous position upon return.

If gay or lesbian African Americans need to take an extended leave from work to care for sick partners, they risk losing their jobs and health insurance. Exclusion from the FMLA has the potential to negatively impact the lives of thousands of African American children and families. Access to marriage would entitle these families to the same safety net available to most heterosexual families.

Same-gender African American couples cannot file joint tax returns and enjoy income and estate tax benefits; they cannot collect Social Security death benefits after the death of their partner; they do not have the automatic right to make medical decisions for an incapacitated spouse; and they do not have access to family health insurance plans in most states. All of these restrictions have adverse emotional and financial consequences on African American children and families, who are already disproportionately represented among America's poor.

Benefit: Diminished Stigma

I believe that same-gender marriage would diminish some of the social stigma associated with being gay or lesbian. When historically marginalized groups gain access to the same social institutions and resources available to the dominant group, that access eventually will diminish some of their stigma and afford the group a level of social acceptance (Merton, 1941). A case in point can be demonstrated with a comparison between the opposition to same-gender marriage and the opposition to interracial marriage that existed throughout much of United States history.

Interracial marriages were once perceived as a threat to the social order, an argument we hear today from some opponents of same-gender marriage. I am married to a White man, which would have been illegal not too long ago. It may be difficult for many Americans to believe there were laws to prevent Blacks and Whites from marrying each other throughout much of U. S history. These anti-miscegenation (racial mixing) laws were enacted at various times in all but seven states (Newbeck, 2004).

In 1911 Congressman Roddenberry from Georgia proposed a constitutional amendment to ban interracial marriage, claiming: "Intermarriage between whites and blacks is repulsive and averse to every sentiment of pure American spirit. It is abhorrent and repugnant. It is subversive to social peace" (Gilmore, 1973, p. 32). In a statement during the congressional hearing on the proposed constitutional amendment to ban same-gender marriage, Chuck Muth, president of

Citizen Outreach argued that just as social opposition to interracial marriage declined over time, opposition to same-gender marriage will also diminish. He stated in his testimony:

Of course, supporters of the current federal marriage amendment will say that was way back then. You cannot equate two gay guys getting married to the notion of a black man getting married to a white woman. However, taking into consideration the passions and context of the times, it is not much of a stretch to believe that people such as Representative Roddenberry found the idea of interracial marriage just as unnatural and abhorrent then as many find the idea of gay marriage today (*Judicial Activism*, 2004, p. 20).

As late as 1967 interracial marriages between heterosexuals was illegal in 13 states. Later that year in the case *Loving v. State of Virginia*, the United States Supreme Court finally declared the remaining bans on interracial marriage unconstitutional (Wallenstein, 2002). The court decision sparked a steady increase in the number of interracial marriages nationwide, suggesting that the removal of legal sanctions led to diminished negative social sanctions (Kalmijn, 1993). Furthermore, the decreased negative social sanctions led to diminished social stigmatization of interracial marriage. In 1968, just a year after the Supreme Court ruled, only 20% of Americans approved of interracial marriages. Ten years later in 1978, the approval rate jumped to 36%. By 2003 the approval rate had gone up to 73% among African Americans, Latinos, and Whites (Ludwig, 2004).

Benefit: Decrease in Homophobia

Homophobia in the African American communities may be one of the contributing factors preventing many gay African American men from coming out (Brandt, 1999). Same-gender marriage may result in diminished social stigmatization of gays and lesbians, which over time may reduce the homophobia within the African American community. Much has been written about the experience of African American men who have sex with men but do not identify themselves as gay (Boykin, 2005; Williams, 2004).

The phenomenon of African American men secretly having sex with men while maintaining relationships and having sex with women has been referred to living on the *down low*. Living on the “down low” occurs among other racial groups, but the term has its origin in Black popular culture (Phillips, 2005). African American men living on the *down low* are a source of controversy in our communities. Phillips argues that as the rate of HIV/AIDS among African American heterosexual women has increased, the *down low* discourse has shifted within the Black community to linking African American men to the spread of the virus among African American women, especially since the primary transmission category now is high-risk heterosexual contact followed by injection drug use (Brink, 2004; Center for Disease Control, 2005).

Homophobia already may make it difficult for some African American men to acknowledge their gay or bisexual identities. With the current controversy linking *down low* men to the increase of HIV/AIDS among African American women, it may be even more difficult for them to come out. Some gay men may feel social pressure to engage in heterosexual relationships and marry. No one benefits in the African American community when homophobia runs so deep that it prevents our African American brothers and sisters from living authentic lives.

All of the above factors and benefits point to a credible thesis that heterosexual African Americans should support same-gender marriage. The logic is inescapable that this will benefit all African Americans immediately.

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Racist and Homophobic Bullying in Adulthood: Narratives from Gay Men of Color in Higher Education

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Abstract: This paper examines how racist and homophobic bullying is manifested in adulthood in the context of higher education. This paper provides a brief concept of bullying and narratives from gay men of color in higher education to conceptualize racist and homophobic bullying in higher education.

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

According to the scholars and researchers, bullying is not a new phenomenon to our society (Field, 1996). Bullying behaviors have been around for a long time and deeply pervade many dimensions of our culture, particularly in educational settings and at workplaces (Namie & Namie, 2000; Olweus, 1993; Randall, 1997). Scholars and researchers in bullying and violence have repeatedly found that bullying is endemic and affects many people in contemporary global society (Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf, & Cooper, 2003). In the contemporary American workplace, 41.4% of employees reported that they had been bullied at their workplace within six months, and an estimated 47 million workers experienced psychological aggression and some forms of bullying directed at them in the workplace within a twelve-month period (Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006).

Studies of adults bullying in higher education are in need, however (Twale & De Luca, 2008). In adult and higher education, scholars and researchers have examined and explored how power dynamics and positionality influence teaching and learning transactions in classroom environments (Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000). Bullying also involves power dynamics and positionality, however there is a paucity of understanding surrounding it. Adult bullying based particularly on racism and homophobia has not been explored yet either in adult and higher education, and no study has focused on the intersection of racist and homophobic bullying at this point in time.

The paper's purpose was to understand what adult bullying is based on racism and homophobia. This paper particularly illustrates the concept of the intersection of racist and homophobic bullying in higher education by providing an extensive literature review and narratives of two gay men of color, whose stories are presented and analyzed to elicit the concept of bullying in adulthood based on racism and homophobia in higher education.

What is bullying?

According to Agervold (2007), it is crucial to achieve a consensus on a definition of bullying among scholars and researchers, so the results and findings of one study can be compared with another. However, with so many independent investigations on bullying, particularly in the context of childhood school settings, there is no agreed on definition of bullying at this point in time (Agervold, 2007; Randell 1997). However, it is significant to look at different, but often very similar, definitions in order to capture the bullying phenomena.

Olweus's (1993) definition has been much cited by scholars in school bullying. His definition of bullying is that "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed,

repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (Olweus, 1993, p. 9). He further explained what negative action implies in his definition. He stated, “it is negative action when someone intentionally inflicts, or attempts to inflict, injury or discomfort upon another.... Negative actions can be carried out by words (verbally)... [and] by physical contact” (p. 9). In addition to Olweus’s definition of bullying above, Smith and Sharp (1994) defined bullying as “the systematic abuse of power” (p. 2). They further stated, “Power can be abused ... if the abuse is systematic—repeated and deliberate—bullying seems a good name to describe it” (p. 2).

In the literature of workplace bullying, Adams (1992) described workplace bullying as “a malignant cancer. It creeps up on you long before you—or anyone else—are able to appreciate what it is that is making you feel the ill effects” (p. 9). Leymann (1990) also described negative workplace phenomena as:

‘mobbing,’ ganging up on someone’ or psychic terror. It occurs as schisms, where the victim is subjected to a systematic stigmatizing through, inter alia, injustices (encroachment of a person’s rights), which after a few years can mean that the person in question is unable to find employment in his/her specific trade (p. 119).

Furthermore, Leymann (1990) stated that “psychical terror or mobbing in working life means hostile and unethical communication which is directed in a systematic way by one or a number of persons mainly toward one individual” (p. 120). So, Leymann’s definition of bullying in the workplace is psychological, implying one’s individual suffering of hostility in the workplace.

American scholars of bullying in the workplace, Namie and Namie (2000), defined bullying in the workplace as:

the repeated, malicious, health-endangering mistreatment of one employee (the Target) by one or more employees (the bully, bullies). The mistreatment is psychological violence, a mix of verbal and strategic assaults to prevent the Target from performing work well. (p. 3)

Further, Einarsen, Hole, Zapf, and Cooper (2003) provided a definition of bullying at work by integrating different authors’ definitions of bullying in the workplace. They defined workplace bullying as:

Harassing, offending, socially excluding someone or negatively affecting someone’s work tasks. In order for the label bullying (or mobbing) to be applied to a particular activity, interaction or process it has to occur repeatedly and regularly (e.g. weekly) and over a period of time (e.g. about six months). Bullying is an escalating process in the course of which the person confronted ends up in an inferior position and becomes the target of systematic negative social acts. A conflict cannot be called bullying if the incident is an isolated event or if two parties of approximately equal ‘strength’ are in conflict. (p. 15)

Although scholars define bullying differently, there are some commonalities among the definitions of bullying:

1. Negative actions and reactions are present;
2. Imbalance of power relations exists between a bully (or bullies) and a victim;
3. Intention of bullies is to hurt the victim; and
4. Persistency of bullying.

These elements above seem to be widely accepted by researchers and scholars, but some scholars question whether those elements are absolutely necessary in definitions of bullying in order to call a phenomenon bullying. Randall (1997) approached bullying from a perspective of

aggression in the workplace. He defined bullying as “the aggressive behavior arising from the deliberate intent to cause physical or psychological distress to others” (Randall, 1997, p. 4). In his definition, he did not specify frequency and duration that an incident of bullying has to include. Rather, he argued that a one-time incident of bullying could cause significant damage either physically or psychologically to the victim (Randall, 1997). Further, Randall stated, “Aggressive behavior does not have to be regular or repeated for it to be bullying behavior” (p. 5). This perspective leads other scholars to investigate the severity of damage to the victims from bullying.

Specific Types of Bullying: Racist and Homophobic Bullying

Some scholars distinguish certain types of bullying from “general bullying” (Fox & Stallworth, 2005, p. 439) which is an incident of bullying that occurs to anyone. For example, Fox and Stallworth (2005) focused on race/ethnicity in their study of bullying in the U. S. workplace, and introduced racial/ethnic bullying. They defined racial/ethnic bullying as “the umbrella concept for ... various conceptualizations of ill-treatment and hostile behavior” (p. 439) toward people of color. Racial/ethnic bullying is specific and “attacks the target explicitly based on race or ethnicity” (p. 439).

While racial/ethnic minorities become the targets or victims of bullying, which Fox and Stallworth defined as the concept of racial/ethnic bullying, Misawa (in press) argued that when researchers and scholars focus on victims of bullying based on race/ethnicity, they tend to define the phenomena as racial bullying. However, from the victims’ perspectives, it is *racist bullying*, not racial/ethnic. Sometimes when people of color are involved in situations of bullying, they are targeted because of their race, and they face discrimination and marginalization based on racist ideologies manifest in the phenomenon of bullying.

In addition to racist bullying, homophobic bullying is also a specific type of bullying. Sears (in press) defined homophobic bullying as a long-term relationship built on acts of repeated aggression performed by a more powerful subject against a victim who is somehow less powerful, which is related to the victim’s and/or victimizer’s actual or presumed sexual or gender identity. Rigby (2008) reported incidents of homophobic bullying occur frequently and are serious issues in school settings:

homophobic bullying in schools is known to be common. In a large-scale study conducted in Canadian high schools, 3.6% of those attending were categorized from self-reports as sexual-minority adolescents, that is identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, or as questioning their sexual identity. (p. 209)

In addition, Williams, Connolly, Pepler, and Craig (2005), reported that children who are not heterosexual were more likely than heterosexual youth to be victims of peer bullying.

Although those two types of bullying are examined in addition to general bullying, they cannot be thought of separately when researchers and scholars try to understand experiences of gay people of color regarding racist and homophobic bullying. From the review of literature above emerges an operational definition of the intersection of racist and homophobic bullying:

An incident of bullying involves a victim who is a gay person of color and somehow less powerful in terms of physical, psychological, or sociocultural positions than the bully or who fits the bully’s racist homophobic stereotype, and a perpetuated recurrent or singular; unwanted or unwarranted; intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or threatening conduct on the part of the bully

that sustains the bully's position of power and destroys the victim's well-being, dignity, and safety or is significant enough to cause the victim physical and/or psychological harm.

Examples of Racist and Homophobic Bullying

This section will highlight narratives which involve aspects of racist and homophobic bullying defined above from gay men of color in higher education. The words used in the descriptions and in the quotes are the words used by the participants themselves. The names that are utilized here are pseudonyms in order to provide confidentiality.

Sam's Story

Sam, a 28-year-old gay African American man who live in a residence hall. He described his experiences in the residence hall regarding homophobic remarks. He pointed out that the residence halls had been at times an unfriendly location for gay men of color.

Last year I had a roommate who I told that I was gay, and he made a couple jokes. Then, he made some comments on gay life styles. I did not think that was kind. I live on campus, so I am around a lot of youth. So I have heard some youth that say things....

In addition to his experiences at the residence hall, Sam shared a negative experience of his that involved sexual orientation on campus.

I was told by some younger students, I guess I heard of their whispering, "he's a f---in' queer. "...Sometimes queer is used in a negative sense. "That queer" means "that's not cool." Sometimes when I hear that, I don't like it. I compromise because I think it is a part of the environment in which we live.

Gary's Story

Gary, a 25-year-old gay Native man also stated that campus environments including interactions with other people heavily influenced his campus life in higher education. Gary also spoke about his experience regarding race:

I don't look like a real Native person. I mean that I look more like a white person. When I lived in the dorm, I made a friend in an English class who was from Hawaii. One night I called him up and went to his room with one of my Native friends from a different town who had stopped at the university for the night, and this friend of mine from Hawaii told me that he didn't like that I had brought a drunk Native to his room. I was so offended that I broke off that friendship immediately.

After talking about his experiences regarding racism and homophobia in higher education, Gary reflected his overall college life:

I have always felt that being gay was something to hide, and I always get gawked at when I tell people I am part Native Alaskan. I think those two things are kept hidden at the university in the classroom and in the advertising of the university. My science classes are the worst for the anti-gay comments. Lots of the men in those classes use "gay " to mean "not good".

Discussion

Sam and Gary unfortunately experienced the ubiquitous college environment in the United States where gay men of color have to face racism and homophobia (Kumashiro, 2001). The college environment that Sam and Gary described reflects how American mainstream society treats gay people of color. They spoke about incidents that were offensive, threatening,

and manipulative. Since they experienced verbal remarks that consisted of racism and homophobia, their experiences were of racist and homophobic bullying. Field (1996) supports this argument in addition to the proposed operational definition of bullying. He listed behaviors in bullying, and some of them included racist and homophobic bullying such as:

- Inappropriate remarks, comments, aspersions, suggestions, etc., about a person's gender, race, color, beliefs, sexual orientation, background, upbringing, etc.; and
- Jokes of a sexist, racist, ageist or similar nature whose objective is to humiliate. (Field, 1996, p. 45)

Gary's experience with his Native friend and his college peer showed how racism and stereotypes are intertwined in racist bullying. Such an offensive and hurtful experience made Gary discontinue his friendship with his college peer. Because someone *looks* white, it does not mean that the person is for racism. Racism is permeated in American society and it perpetuates tension among different racial communities (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001).

Sam's experience that he heard jokes regarding him being gay from his roommate was oppressive. Since Sam's roommate was the one who made such an inappropriate comment on being gay, Sam might have felt threatened and intimidated because he had to live with the person who was homophobic. In Gary's experience with his friend who made a homophobic comment on gay people, Gary did not get hurt physically, but he was wounded internally. Even though these two experienced singular homophobic bullying incidents, their perceptions of campus life were diminished.

Also, Sam and Gary experienced stereotypes, which involved homophobic bullying. Both of them stated they heard that the words, gay and queer, were utilized offensively and negatively. This stereotypical ideology could be related to stigmatization of homosexuality in the United States. Although Sam internalized and accepted the usage of the terms because of where he is, it is important to deconstruct and relearn the terms and make it be a positive term. In other words, it is important for gay people to normalize their sexuality in order for them to survive in this homophobic society.

Conclusion and Implications for Adult Education

Critical race theorists stated that racism is embedded subtly in the United States (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). When scholars and researchers in adult and higher education investigated contemporary demographics and experiences of students, they found that people who were of minority status experienced more negative incidents such as discrimination, harassment, and hate crimes (Grace & Hill, 2004; Johnson-Bailey & Cervero, 2000). Gay and lesbian scholars find homophobia and heterosexism widely standardized in American society (Pinar, 1998). Higher education is also experiencing difficulties and internal resistance in creating democratic campus environments for gay people of color. Gay men of color face both racism and homophobia in their campus lives. When they encounter incidents of racist and homophobic bullying in higher education, they could be physically and psychologically hurt. These two narratives demonstrated how racist and homophobic bullying does exist in higher education.

In Gary's narrative, he said that he felt he needed to conceal his identities when he was on campus because he often felt that the environment on campus was not safe. To that end, support from and a safer environment that is created by adult educators would sustain gay men of color like Sam and Gary. Eventually, adult educators would be the ones who are really implementing social justice in their own practice. It is important for adult educators to support students in a safer environment. One way to initiate support for students is to understand what is

going on in the classrooms and campus environments and cultivate a more inclusive environment. Adult educators need to understand the institutional policies regarding student protections such as anti-discrimination, diversity, and multicultural education policies.

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Joining The Family: Experiences of Be(com)ing Ally Activists

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Abstract: *Transformative learning is one way of viewing the changes that take place as a straight person becomes an ally activist of LGBTQ people. The stories of three ally activists are highlighted in this paper, illuminating aspects of their transformative learning experiences.*

Introduction

This paper draws upon research done as part of my dissertation *The Experience of Becoming a Straight Ally Activist*, which will be defended later this summer. The purpose of this paper is to theorize the experience of becoming and being an ally activist in terms of transformative learning and then draw connections between the experience of becoming an ally activist to my experiences of understanding myself as a queer man and coming out.

The Social Construction of Identity of Straight Ally Activist

The concept of a static identity has been challenged through the work of poststructuralist and postmodernist researchers seeking to deconstruct stable identity characteristics (Hines, 2006). This challenge has changed the understanding of sexual orientation and gender identity to rather fluid systems that relate to numerous other internal and external forces and power structures. The labels of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and straight are not fixed identities, but rather words that might describe a fluidic relationship between body, desire, social forces, sexual behavior as well as outness and passing. Even these components of body, desire, social forces, sexual behavior, outness, and passing are situational and contextual. As such, the concepts of gender and sexuality are at best loose collections of more or less similar characteristics, despite numerous judgments made by others about the gender or sexuality of a given person.

Given this level of social deconstruction, it becomes necessary to maintain use of the identity labels of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and straight for the purposes of this research. These categories can help us do work, but must always be regarded with a hermeneutics of suspicion, since they do not represent the variety of human experiences they may attempt to capture. The terms in use in this paper should be regarded with that suspicion in mind. In addition, the words gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and straight have come to be used in many different ways by many different types of people. In recent years, the word queer has been used by some groups to try to effectively deal with the resistance to categorize identity as an essential characteristic.

Ally, in usage in this study, refers to a person who is united to the cause of social justice for a group of people. In this case, the allies are typically regarded as straight and united with LGBTQ (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer) persons or the movement for LGBTQ inclusion and rights for LGBTQ people. One dictionary definition of allies is “one in helpful

association with another” (ally, n.d.). The etymology for the word ally comes from a Latin-based word that means “to bind to” (ally, n.d.).

An activist is someone who practices activism. Activism is “the doctrine or practice of vigorous action or involvement as a means of achieving political or other goals” (activism, n.d.). Activism, in terms of adult education, can also mean “direct action contesting or upholding one side of a controversial issue” (Hill, 2004, p.85), and is a range of activities in which educational practice takes a large part. As such, ally activism is a concept that ties together being an ally to LGBTQ people and taking action with or on behalf of LGBTQ issues. The social psychology literature has called this type of activism outgroup activism, where a person is an activist for a group of which she or he is not a member (Borshuk, 2004).

The Study

The original study conducted was, as stated in the introduction, a hermeneutic phenomenological study with the research question, “What is the lived experience of being and becoming a straight ally activist?” Eight participants were recruited using nominated sampling techniques with contacts made to activism groups in which I participated. Participants narrated their stories of becoming ally activists. While this paper is not a hermeneutic phenomenological report of their experiences, it will highlight material created during interviews for the original study. This study was ruled to be exempt from review by the University IRB. Participants ranged in age from early 20s to 70s, and were equally split between men and women. Among the group were a graduate student, a retired pastor, a college advisor, a psychologist, a volunteer LGBTQ advocacy worker, a corporate vice president, a teaching theologian, and a physics professor. After the hour-length initial interview, another interview was scheduled with three of the participants to gain greater detail and collect additional information.

Transformative Learning

According to Mezirow, transformative learning is “the process of effecting change in a *frame of reference*” (1997, p. 5). People see the world around them and make sense of their experience in the world through their frame of reference, which is built by previous experiences, such as prior learning, associations with people, and experiencing significant events. The frame of reference leads people as they create a point of view, a complex framework of “beliefs, judgments, and attitudes we have regarding specific individuals or groups” (Mezirow, 1997, p. 6). For example, homophobia may be the result of a negative point of view held about homosexuality and homosexual people. This point of view may be shaped by numerous experiences including experiencing homophobia while growing up and learning about homosexual people from others, such as peers, family members, and religious leaders, whether the learning actually reflects truth or not regarding homosexual people.

A transformative learning experience is then the changing of the frame of reference as a result of an experience or gaining new information that cannot be reconciled with the current frame of reference. The learner can either disregard the new experience or information as illogical, aberrant, or simply untrue, or reshape the frame of reference by assimilating the new experience or information into a new frame of reference. Oftentimes, the experience of being confronted by this new experience or information is disorienting if it cannot fit into the current frame of reference.

While analyzing the interviews, I realized that most of the people I interviewed explained and described their own experience of becoming and being an outgroup activist using stories

about transformative learning they had experienced. In the next section, I will illustrate and theorize through a few of the examples of how transformative learning was a part of the experience of being and becoming a straight ally activist through the interview process.

Brenda's Story

Brenda begins to realize that things are not as simple as she thought for her lesbian friends. Her learning can be summed up in the following statement, "Well, they're human beings, I'm a human being, what's the big deal? Then, I began to realize that it wasn't a big deal for me, but it was for others."

Brenda describes herself as a straight woman. Her "partner" is a man to whom she is not married. She got involved in a religious organization that held weekend retreats and quickly got into the leadership of the organization, teaching and organizing other weekend retreats. In this role, she met lots of friends, including a lesbian couple, Dawn and Cathy. While she had never really had too much experience with gay and lesbian people, she got to know them and become a close friend. When Dawn was teaching at a weekend retreat with Brenda, another leader, Audrey, discovered in casual conversation that Dawn was a lesbian, Audrey reacted loudly. Brenda describes, "All hell broke loose, because 'Oh my gosh! There is a lesbian on the team!' People lost the focus of the weekend." Part of the leadership team left the retreat facility and a number of the retreat participants followed. Audrey called the regional director of the program, who refused to intervene. Dawn left the retreat early as well. Brenda was left with a retreat that could no longer function. Brenda felt deceived and betrayed because one of the organization's mantras was "God loves you and so do I." She felt like this was far from the actual truth after that weekend's retreat.

Brenda had taken the message of the organization and thought that it included all people when it said that "God's love is for all." This is the kind of thing she taught about at the retreat and discovered later that the message only included those who were heterosexual. She was faced with the disorienting dilemma of trying to reconcile the behavior and reaction of a number of other teachers, leaders, and participants who left after they discovered that a member of the team was a lesbian. Brenda assumed that others knew that Dawn was a lesbian and were welcoming of her. Unfortunately, Brenda changed her view of this religious organization and organized religion in general after this experience. She knows that "all" does not necessarily mean "all" and further questions the things that religion says. She recalls, "So it became very apparent to me that I was some naïve person that went 'I don't see it as being any different, what's the big deal?'"

Joe's Story

Joe, the son of a conservative pastor, learned that same-sex relationships "were incompatible with Christian teaching." During college, Joe attended a chapel service led by an alumna of the college. He was excited since it would prove to be a controversial subject because she is a partnered lesbian who is speaking as a religious person in a church mostly intolerant of LGBTQ people.

Joe recalls, "She comes in and she introduces herself and immediately within the first five words, she says, 'I am a lesbian woman in a committed relationship who is coming here today to speak on Christian values.'" Joe remembered quite a few people getting up and leaving chapel at that point. Although Joe had previously been someone who had really disliked gay and lesbian people and had even taken action to avoid having someone he suspected was gay from being his roommate, he continued listening to her speaking. While she was speaking, Joe found

her to know the Bible and Christianity well, and was surprised that Erma had even attended seminary. Joe found himself attracted to the way she talked about social injustices to LGBTQ people and other social injustices in society. He remembers thinking, “Wow. This is the new social issue. Before it was people of color, and then it was women, and now it’s these people who have been ostracized.” This challenged his beliefs about LGBTQ people. Joe saw himself as a person of faith and his participation in systems that deny rights to LGBTQ people as incompatible with his religious beliefs after he realized that LGBTQ issues related to other issues of discrimination.

Joe’s point of view about LGBTQ people was shaped by his father’s strict preaching against homosexuality and preaching for traditional gender roles in the family. Joe also was taught that gay men were pedophiles as he grew up. This point of view was challenged when he listened to Erma’s presentations about Christian values. He began to meet other LGBTQ people and see what he had previously understood about LGBTQ people to be untrue. Because of what he learned, he later attended training around issues of homophobia in the church and became an advocate for LGBTQ justice. While remembering the way he had treated gay men in the past, he felt “called by God” to volunteer full-time for an organization for LGBTQ advocacy and justice issues for a whole year. He now attends seminary, planning to become a pastor in the church and work to change “the hearts and minds of people.”

Niles’ Story

Niles’ parents got divorced when he was quite young, after his dad came out as a gay man. Niles remembers his dad talking to him about how things were not always safe and Niles shouldn’t tell others that he had a gay dad when they moved to a small town. Niles remembers hearing messages that were conflicting when he went to visit his mother’s house, since she and his step-dad would discuss gay people in quite a negative way. Niles grew up with a lot of respect for his dad. When Niles was a teen, he got teased about being gay and having a gay dad. He felt angry about the situation he was put into and bitter about all the teasing. Niles knew that he wasn’t gay, but being teased about it because of his dad being gay.

After participating in some anti-racism work in high school, Niles began to question some of his own feelings about gay people and his own homophobia. He knew he loved his father, but was unsure about how he felt about other LGBTQ people, especially gay men. He began to become close to one of his high school teachers, who had a feeling that Niles was experiencing these troubles in his life. One day she asked a question he indicated that he’d never forget, “Do you love your dad?” When Niles said, “absolutely,” she told him, “Then you gotta fight.” His teacher taught Niles about activism, and how about he could become involved in trying to create change.

Niles became involved in numerous social justice activism projects as he was in college, and continued to confront his own homophobia, as he began to encounter LGBTQ persons his own age. Although Niles always loved his father, he became upset that his father’s sexuality had caused Niles to be teased about his own sexuality and his dad’s sexuality. When he began meeting people his own age, he began to reflect on his own homophobia, and see it as something irrational. He said that he still “catches himself” when he has a homophobic reaction, and sees this as evidence that homophobia is very deeply rooted in our culture and in our person. Niles says:

I don’t just want to go around saying that being gay is ok. I want to point out to straight people where this is hurting them, not so much the other way around, because I think so

much of diversity work is about making it happy and fluffy, but it's never been that way to me. If homophobia is to go away, it's got to be the doing of straight people.

Transformative learning theory is one way that can be used to explain and analyze the experiences of straight ally activists. Ally activists see their own transformations as they become more and more involved in ally activism, yet realize that they continue to develop as ally activist. It is a transformation that does not have a defined endpoint. At the same way, they believe there is still more work to be done in terms of eliminating oppression. All three of these ally activists have had different experiences, but have experienced transformations to become the ally activists they are today and will continue to develop into. As I reflect on the transformative learning of ally activists, I can draw connections to my own transformative learning as a young person, just coming to terms with my own sexuality and identity, in a place and time where being a gay man is not seen as a positive identity.

My Transformative Learning

As I think about my own experiences of continuing to come out as a queer man, I can easily see my experiences as embodied experiences of transformation. I grew up on a farm in rural Minnesota, not really knowing anything about LGBTQ people except what I had seen on the TV, learned in church, or learned in the locker room or on the school bus. None of this gave me ways that I would consider healthy for being a queer person. I remember realizing I was probably a gay man when I was a young adolescent, and realizing I was in love with my best friend, a neighboring farm boy. As he put it about that time, "I don't think I'm interested in the same things you are," my heart was broken. One of my first transformative learning experiences was dealing with not being able to find any other boys like me, feeling like I could not tell anyone, and figuring I would contract AIDS and die (since this was my exposure to gay men on TV in the 1980s). I somehow managed to survive high school by burying myself in academics and activities while still thinking I was deviant, bad, and immoral because of the feelings I had for other boys.

In my thinking, I had to be the only kid my age who thought he was gay, even as I entered college. I met another man my age, who thought he was gay too, and was amazed, because there was another man my age who thought he was gay too. I was amazed that the two of us had managed to meet so quickly, because I was sure there could not be more than two of us in the metro area in which I attended college. I was somehow under the assumption that all gay men were much older, and I would be the only one my age. Then I found our LGBTQ center on campus, and found out how wrong I was.

Since the time of being an adolescent, I have had numerous transformative learning experiences that changed who I was. I can relate my own experience to the experience of Stellaluna, the main character of a children's book by the same name (Cannon, 1993). Stellaluna, a baby bat, becomes lost from her mother and is raised in a bird family. Stellaluna cannot seem to understand why she has such a hard time being a bird. The worms are not tasty and sleeping upright just does not feel good to Stellaluna. Stellaluna learns to fly as her bird brothers and sisters learn to fly. One day, she gets lost and is discovered by another bat as she is hanging with her feet down (upside down for a bat). She is introduced into the bat world by her newfound bat friend. She learns that this is the world she belongs in, but never forgets her bird family, who accept her for the bat she is.

The stories of ally activists becoming involved and the stories of LGBTQ people realizing and identifying themselves as LGBTQ people carry universal tales of transformation, such as changing the view of a group of people you trusted that later betrayed you, realizing that people you were taught to dislike are actually good people, learning to love those around you and fight to protect them, and learning the world is not as innocent a place as you once thought.

As adult educators involved in social movements and witnessing change in people, one thing we can do is to offer people new ways of seeing the world and being in the world. Adult educators can also be there to witness to people who are questioning their own sexual and gender identities, in order to provide a voice of support.

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Slamming the Closet Door and Taking Control: Analysis of Personal Transformation and Social Change as LGBT Podcasting Blazes a Trail of Democratization of the Media

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Keywords: Empowerment, voice, transformative learning, new media, LGBT, technology

Abstract: Mainstream media prohibits free publication and circulation of LGBT perspectives; this research analyzes and reveals the rapid development and metamorphosis of the LGBT podcasting community (2005-2008) from a queer theory framework. Included are current use and opportunities for new media as instructional tools of voice and equity in adult learning. Participants are encouraged to listen to podcasts produced by the researcher for an introduction to the topic. Post-conference dialogue will also be available.

Introduction

Since 2004 Internet-based new media formats have exploded the exposure of the online community to alternative voices, viewpoints and experiences. From political and personal blogs, to independent podcasts of all flavors and now popular YouTube® videos, the general public has finally adopted the original purpose of the Internet: for users to be *content creators* (King & Gura, 2007; Walch & Lafferty, 2006). It is through the recent advent of convenient and free Web 2.0 technologies, such as those new media examples of blogs, podcasts and vlogs that people of all ages, levels of technology expertise and varied backgrounds are claiming their place and “voice” on the vast expanse of the Web.

Podcasting is a new media technology which has particular interest to adults who desire to “be heard” and yet might not have or want access to mainstream media. Since 2005, anyone with access to a computer, Internet and an inexpensive microphone can record their content of choice, distribute, and syndicate it worldwide for free (King & Gura, 2007). With such a wide scale adoption of podcasting, it is significant for researchers and students of adult learning to understand why and how the LGBT community has identified and made use of this communication tool. Indeed, it has become a transformative learning experience for many of them as they explore different roles, sexual identities, and personas. This paper provides new aspects of the research study related to meaning for adult learning practice. (King & Sanquist, 2008 for more).

Purpose of the Study

The Need

The opportunity for this research is seen in a subtle, but significant contrast in equity. While podcasting has stormed mainstream culture through iTunes® in the last 3 years (2005-2008), few LGTBQ podcasts are available there. In contrast, independent podcast directories provide a wealth of podcast primary sources to learn from, document, showcase and analyze an awakening and celebration of oppressed voices through this dynamic new media. These podcasts reveal LGBT adults discovering their voices, morphing their public self, and building societal impact individually and collectively.

The podcasting movement has been widely associated with the slogan, “Democratization of the Media” (Geoghegan, 2008; Walch & Lafferty, 2006). Therefore, it is consistent to assert that finding one’s

voice and claiming public space, free from political, social, economic (music and broadcasting), and religious constraints would be a common motivation among LGBT podcasters.

This study explores, documents and analyzes the experience of the first three critically formative years of this new media of podcasting when thousands of independent pioneers found their voice. In this research and analysis it is evident that LGBT podcasters did not just come out of the closet, they were intent on taking control and in fact slammed the closet door behind them with finality.

The Problem Statement

In the course of this study, I documented the development of the podcasting movement from a participant observer perspective and identify a clear pattern that the two largest segments in this first wave of podcasting as music, and gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) podcasts. Of particular interest to the adult learning field is, what can we learn from this experience and how can podcasting be used instructionally with LGBT adults. The research questions addressed in this paper enumerate this overall problem and are progressively revealed in the Findings section.

Theoretical Bases

In understanding the oppression of LGBT adults in dominant cultures and the role of new media, I used several literatures as our theoretical base. The transformative learning literature was the comprehensive framework for, in this case, LGBT adults continuing to learn about their persona, identity and new media communication (Cranton 2006; King, 2005, Mezirow, 2000). The premises and stages of this model include opportunities to understand adult's "exploring new roles" and "trying them out." Being able to build on prior transformative learning and sexual orientation development research and perspectives, (Brooks & Edwards, 1997; King & Biro, 2006) was critical to this study of technology enabled global communication and reaching into new possibilities for adult learning.

Not only did I use the broader literature on sexual orientation development (Lovaas, Elia, & Yep, 2006; Strong & Others, 2008), but also that grounded in the adult learning field (Badgett & Frank, 2007; Hill, 2006). Queer theory literature illustrates the political and social oppression, discrimination and conflict issues which emerged quickly in these data. Queer theory's focus on the roots of these issues guided my greater understanding of the significance and possibilities of empowerment of the oppressed group. Observations and recommendations include global broadcasts to the general public, and the opportunity for empowerment via teaching and lifelong learning. This research also reveals the synthesis of lifelong learning and LGBT sexual identity development (King & Biro, 2006).

Research Method

This research provides a case study analysis of a social dynamic trend, empowerment of adults, and technology innovation and adoption which indicates changes rooted in adult learning theory and research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1997). Both qualitative and quantitative inquiries were used with the researcher serving as an expert participant observer (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The researcher has been podcasting since June 2005 and provides integral insight into the technology, context, and meaning of new media (King & Gura, 2007).

The current research used a mixed-methods approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Specifically, this was a qualitative- quantitative – qualitative sequential design which used five of the seven stages outlined by Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003): data reduction, data display, data transformation, data consolidation, data comparison and data integration. The data for the qualitative case study was drawn from three years of experience and field notes ending in March 2008; the analyses of the podcast directories were formally performed in early 2008.

Data gathering methods included primary document examination and evaluation via a research rating system established to document the source of information, frequency of listings, duration of the series over months and years, host and possible partnership/ organizational relationships, and website reviews. The observations from the LGBT directories were identified as separate sources of podcasts from those in directories, because they likely had a smaller distribution (not to a general audience). I also selected LGBT podcasters with which to conduct follow up interviews based on their prominence, longevity and contribution to the field of podcasting and the emergent trends.

Specifically, these data were analyzed in what is described as Sequential Mixed Methods Analysis (SMMA) (Onwuegbuzie & Teddlie, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Information regarding the content, profiles and history of 85 podcasts were examined from 6 different podcast directories (Podcast Pickle, Podcast Alley, iTunes, Podcast 411, Libsyn, and Rainbow Radio). In addition, 8 interviews were conducted over several months. These data were analyzed through tabulation, frequencies and constant comparison for emergent themes and field notes reduced to a narrative. Emergent themes were identified through coding method by constant comparison. This analysis was pursued until the data had been theoretically saturated (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Findings and Discussion

The following themes and patterns emerged, upon examination for the research questions.

What is Podcasting and New Media?

Some historical and technical background will provide clarity of podcasting and new media and provide the basis for our discussion. This background is documented with selected citations, but widely drawn from the researcher's participation in the development and use of the technology during this period of time. She is recognized as one of the leading educational podcasters and instructional technology authors on the topic that has first hand knowledge of this innovative era. (Barnes, 2007)

Podcasting is the distribution of digital recordings via RSS-feed directories. That is, individuals record audio content with computers or digital recorders, post it on the Internet on a publicly available server, create XML script RSS-feed to string it together and deliver the episodes. Then the producers or artists, called podcasters, visit the podcast directories on the Web to enter their information. Once it is reviewed for accuracy and appropriateness (based on the directory, this criteria varies), the podcast will be available in a searchable database for anyone to freely access. (See King, 2008.)

Potential listeners visit these directories, search for topics of interest and review the descriptions. Once selected, they hear the audio files on their own computer. These same audio files can also be ported over to a portable device such as a MP3 player, iPod, and some cell phones so that the listener can be mobile. Podcast listeners enjoy the advantages of time shifting content (convenient times to listen) and place shifting content (location to listen). Podcast listeners indicate they do so while commuting, working out and standing in lines (Li, 2007). Among multi-taskers, podcasts are a popular option to increase content choice and convenience (Walch & Lafferty, 2006).

The power of podcasting is that instead of audio files posted on a website or blog, they are distributed by "push technology" (developed by Winer [RSS 2.0] in 2003) (Geoghegan, 2008). Instead of listeners repeatedly visiting a website to check for their favorite podcast's new episodes, they go to a central source: their podcatcher or podcast directory. When they open their free account, all the podcasts they have "subscribed" to are instantly updated. Technically, the database automatically refreshes, or "pushes," each of the RSS-feeds and retrieves the recent episodes directly to their computer. Wide social adoption of podcasting has occurred since 2006 and made possible by software (i.e., iTunes or FireAnt) and web browsers (Internet Explorer 7.0 and Mozilla's Firefox) which include RSS features.

What is Podcasts Relationship to LGBT Issues and People?

The first wave of podcasting was undoubtedly music: everyone who desired to could live their dream of being a disc jockey, instantly (Walch & Lafferty, 2006). However, the other major group of people who took to the “air waves” was LGBT. As a podcaster and participant in this new media revolution since 2005, I saw this dynamic phenomenon unfold. From a participant observer perspective the dominant voice in this media was a group usually grossly underrepresented in mainstream media.

During this period the *non*-mainstream identity for podcasting was a dominant theme of the media and the participants (2004-2007). People started podcasting because they wanted to be heard and might not have mainstream media support, did not want to cope with bureaucracy, and/or wanted to be free of FCC restrictions (King & Gura, 2007; Lafferty & Walch, 2006). Podcast listeners sought the free opinions and niche topics that would not support mainstream distribution, and/or enjoyed the edgy entertainment.

In fact, the Web is replete with tirades regarding mainstream media being able to censor or oppress the blogging and podcasting communities. In my experience, efforts as late as 2007 to include mainstream media in the circle with independent podcasters were met with great rebuff, consternation and doubt. (See the Podcamp, “unconference”, movement of grassroots, and dynamic conferences: www.podcamp.org)

What Does this Development Demonstrate About an Oppressed Community Gaining Voice?

Based on responses from podcasters and primary document evidence, I explored the benefits LGBT podcasters and community gained from new media. Their accounts repeatedly included references to development of identity, voice, empowerment, affirmation, challenge and confrontation. By summer 2005 all podcasters, LGBT podcasters included, were suddenly in a frantic race for who would reach the top of the podcast directory listings first. “Wannabe DJs” (disc jockeys) were the first to be validated as podcast “rock stars”. However, very quickly an increasing number of LGBT podcasts of the following genres streamed forth: self talk, talk shows, and glamour girl shows.

These data reveal that podcasting enabled LGBT and all podcasters to preserve anonymity if desired. LGBT podcasters either appropriate a stage name of an alternate persona or reveal their hidden self. To use an avatar identity, they would create a stage and show name, hosting and email account.

The traditional LGBT parallel should be evident. In many ways, this virtual and audio-mostly experience was a parallel of the familiar drag queen/drag king and female impersonator. In a technology masterful stroke, the increasingly accepted alternate identities had an entirely new and global platform.

Another parallel construction reveals that mainstream society had “wannabe DJs”, while the LGBT community had “wannabe drag queens.” The pseudonym/avatar enabled podcaster self-expression with a global audience. It also created a “safe” environment in which to explore, develop identity and voice: safe from identity discovery and physical harm, if they so chose.

Confidence and risk taking abounds in these early queer podcasts. The results within the individual LGBT podcaster’s work and across this genre were dramatic. Podcasters developed empowerment, confidence, voice, and focus. As a group many LGBT podcasts had matured from hesitant attempts to unbounded confidence, from self-talk to public education, and from self-indulgence to activism.

In addition to the powerful experience of podcasting for the LGBT participants, there were also obstacles and issues of persistence. In general, the LGBT podcasters broadcasted and publicized both positive and negative feedback about their shows, persona and opinions. The radical difference in these situations compared to non-virtual/online lives is that the LGBT people were in control and able to dispense responses from a position of authority rather than disempowerment. This position cannot be understated for groups of people who have been oppressed in mainstream society.

In addition, while LGBT podcasters’ experiences in this area were similar to those of other podcasters, different social and personal dynamics also emerged. The most common reason people stop

podcasting is because they did not realize the time commitment involved when they started (King & Gura, 2007; Walch & Lafferty, 2006). Regarding obstacles, typically podcasters face time constraints, technology difficulties, waned interest due to fewer listeners, responses from listeners, or their failed dream to rise to fame. However, LGBT podcasters also dealt with confrontation from listeners, pressure from personal relationships and disjuncture in their lives. The last point is of particular interest as it connects with the theory of transformative learning in an informative way. In this case, podcasting may provide a means for LGBT adults to test their different personas, and find that they do not fit. Once they come to this conclusion they can easily withdraw from public view. Others withdrew because they found such a public demonstration of their identity was not as comfortable to them, however these were few.

How Are Podcasting and Other New Media Used in Adult Education Today?

The widest use of podcasting for adult learning is that of language learning (King & Gura, 2007). In fact, review of any of the podcast directories over the last 3 years, consistently shows the ESL, French podcasts, Spanish podcasts and other language podcasts dominating the education charts. And indeed, these numbers were being added to hourly with new episodes and new series. Based on conversations and interviews of podcasters, podcast listeners and adult educators this vibrant demonstration of adult learning may be due in part to the need to and difficulty in learning languages (King & Gura, 2006). In our global society adults need to be conversant with more languages, and they seek out technology to facilitate that learning.

In addition, by Prensky's (2001) definition, current undergraduate students are Digital Natives; they are most comfortable with technology and seek to socialize, and solve every need with it. Young adults do not feel confined to traditional classes to fulfil their learning needs. In order to complete their homework and earn better grades, they seek new media resources. Undoubtedly, the Digital Natives' early adoption of this technology contributes to the catapulting of language learning podcasts to the tops of the charts. But also, consider that language learning has been delivered by radio, audiocassette, and CD for many years; therefore, it was a quick leap to the MP3 and the more mobile format podcasting affords.

What are Experiences and Potential for Personal and Social Change Through Podcasting?

New media is used to meaningfully and effectively provide opportunities for LGBT adult learners to "test the waters" of their closeted or new personas, gain voice, and embrace control in the dominate culture. Integrating this media into adult learning classes from continuing to higher education courses, and beyond, we use valuable adult learning strategies such as active learning, immediate application, transferable workplace skills (technology) and relevant learning (Cranton, 2006; King, 2005).

Approaches to incorporating new media in empowering formats are limitless. New media instruction examples include, but are not limited to, design formats of small group dialogue, learner created media, class presentations designed as global resources and instructor created media; genres of: critical reflection, historical narrative, debate, first person narrative, storytelling, performances, and role playing; assignments as: in class, outside of class, individual, optional formats, group projects and continuing/longterm.

Through these learning activities, LGBT learners may not only experience freedom and validation, but also a platform to share their perspectives with their classmates/colleagues. Dialogue and peer learning are powerful tools for critical pedagogy and new media development by learners supports this as it shifts the classroom focus from teacher to learner. Just as web-based discussions have cultivated deeper reflection and greater dialogue beyond the physical classroom and hour, podcasting provides opportunities for adult learners to articulate their views and send them worldwide. Alternatively instructors can create private distribution. Discussions of details and applications of podcasting with adult learners are available at <http://www.teacherspodcast.org> (see episodes 11-13 and 15).

Limitations of the Research

Limitations of this study include the participant observer role, although the researcher documented her framework for study, her educational philosophy, queer theory perspective and prior conceptions of the topic. In addition, while the evaluation of the podcast directories was thorough, because of the scope of the research project and time constraints, a small sample of LGBT podcasters were briefly interviewed. A study that conducted extensive interviews with a larger sample could reveal much additional information. More extensive analysis of this podcast data will be submitted for publication soon.

Implications and Future Research

This research and paper have introduced the background, development and potential of podcasting among LGTBQ adults in critical pedagogical applications. Dialogue in this emergent field of instructional strategies to support LGBT adult learning is critical. The presentation itself demonstrates new media as an instructional method in several ways. Participants and readers are encouraged to listen to podcasts produced for more information regarding the use of podcasting in education (*Adventures in Transformative Learning* and *The Teacher's Podcast*). To support continued dialogue regarding new media in adult learning and LGBT empowerment, the researcher will host a forum online (see www.transformationed.com for Conference Papers and a LGBTQ&A Preconference 2008 Paper link).

This preconference and AERC are the first publications on the topic of LGBT new media voices in adult learning; additional research needs to be conducted in order to understand and inform adult learning and related areas such as adult development, psychology, diversity training, HR and communications. Future research could focus on how adult listeners benefit from these experiences in their own sexual identity development, diversity awareness and communication. This research offers hope that opportunities of voice and empowerment may be experienced by oppressed and disenfranchised individuals so that they may enjoy freedom and take control of their life journey. Web 2.0 technologies and new media is providing such opportunities for more people, we can work to reveal still more.

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LGBT Families and the Episcopal Church

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Keywords: *LGBT, Episcopal Church*

Abstract: This article presents an interview between Julie Gedro, a parishioner at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral, and Reverend Tom Luck, who is the Dean and Rector of St. Paul's. Reverend Luck has been, and continues to be, an outspoken advocate for LGBT inclusion in the Episcopal Church.

JULIE: Dean Luck, how would you characterize the Episcopal Church's definition of a "family?"

DEAN LUCK: First, let me provide a brief explanation about how the Episcopal Church might come up with such a definition. The Episcopal Church is governed by The General Convention of the Episcopal Church, a body which meets every three years and is made up of two Houses. The first House is the House of Deputies, which consists of equal numbers of clergy and laity who are elected by their respective dioceses. The second is the House of Bishops, which consists of all the bishops of the Episcopal Church. The House of Bishops also meets twice a year outside of General Convention. Any definition of family would come out of General Convention. While General Convention has not specifically defined family, it certainly would include gay relationships as family relationships based on the following resolution that was approved at the last General Convention in 2006:

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention reaffirm The Episcopal Church's historical support of gay and lesbian persons as children of God and entitled to full civil rights; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention reaffirm the 71 st General Convention's action calling upon "municipal councils, state legislatures and the United States Congress to approve measures giving gay and lesbian couples protection[s] such as: bereavement and family leave policies; health benefits; pension benefits; real-estate transfer tax benefits; and commitments to mutual support enjoyed by non-gay married couples"; and be it further

Resolved, That the 75th General Convention oppose any state or federal constitutional amendment that prohibits same-sex civil marriage or civil unions.

This resolution certainly shows that the Episcopal Church believes LGBT couples should have the same legal protections and benefits as straight couples.

JULIE: What are the symbols and rituals that establish, celebrate, and recognize "family" in the Episcopal Church?

DEAN LUCK: There are several symbols and rituals that establish, celebrate and recognize family in the Episcopal Church. One of these is the Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage of a man and a woman. While it may seem inconsistent with the above mentioned resolution, because it is, the Episcopal Church has yet to formally draft any liturgies for the blessing of same-sex relationships. Some bishops have allowed such rites to be used in their dioceses, based on the following sentence in the Book of Common Prayer, "For special days of fasting or thanksgiving, appointed by civil or Church authority and for other special occasions for which no service or prayer has been provided in this Book, the bishop may set forth such forms as are fitting to the occasion." Thus, there have been a number of same-sex blessings in the Episcopal Church because a number of bishops have allowed them under this rubric.

Two other rituals of family life are also widely used for LGBT people. The first is the service for the Blessing of a Home. I participated in just such a service for Gene Robinson and his partner in the 1980s. It is wonderful service where each room of the house is blessed for its specific purpose. Another service is the Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child. This service is entirely appropriate for any couple to celebrate when they have children either by adoption or birth.

Another rite which is often, though incorrectly, seen as a family ritual is Holy Baptism. Baptism often involves family members but by its nature is more focused on the person being baptized and their initiation into the Church.

JULIE: Describe the current state of the Church on same-sex unions.

DEAN LUCK: As mentioned above, a number of same-sex unions have been celebrated in many parishes of the Episcopal Church, and I believe this will continue. The Bishops of the Episcopal Church have been asked not to authorize any official and public rites for such blessings by the worldwide Anglican Communion, and they have agreed to a pause while we work out our relationship with the Anglican Communion. But my understanding is that the Bishops still allow such blessings to occur, while not formally authorizing a particular set of rites for these blessings.

JULIE: Where do you stand on the issue of same-sex unions in the Church?

DEAN LUCK: For twenty years I have been an advocate for the blessings of same-sex relationships where there is a commitment of fidelity and monogamy with the intention that the relationship exist until the couple is parted by death. If I were a bishop today I would refrain from developing any official diocesan liturgies in deference to the Anglican Communion, at least until the next General Convention of 2009. But I would still consider requests from priests to officiate at such blessings on a case by case basis. I would only approve such blessings where at

least one of the people is or is willing to become an active participant in a worshipping community of the Episcopal Church, the same as my policy for weddings of straight couples.

JULIE: As you and I have discussed, I consider you to be a true straight ally, meaning that you consistently have shown me your solidarity and your support about my lesbianism. I am convinced that you feel as much of a stake in the LGBT rights issue as I do, or as anyone else committed to human freedom and dignity. Tell me how you came to embrace the cause as your own.

DEAN LUCK: I first came to know some LGBT people as an undergraduate in college, and came to know more when I was in seminary. It became obvious to me in those days that there was the same variety of healthy behavior and un-healthy behavior, of high levels of commitment and sex without commitment, in the gay community as in the straight community; that there is no such things as “the homosexual lifestyle.” Then in the mid-1980s, a couple of things happened. First, Gene Robinson was the Canon to the Ordinary (the bishop’s assistant) in the Diocese of New Hampshire where I served and he told me of his own journey when I told him I was hearing rumors. This was before he came out. This forced me to be more intentional about deciding where I stood. In that same time frame I attended a conference put on by the Province of New England of the Episcopal Church at which I heard John Fortunato, a gay psychotherapist. Summarizing his comments briefly he said:

You may have heard that gay men are more likely to be promiscuous, to abuse drugs and alcohol, to be suicidal and to have mental health issues. As a psychotherapist I can tell you this is true. But why is it true? The real truth about most human beings is that we do what people expect us to do. You tell us we shouldn’t have sex. But what do you expect of us? You expect us to be promiscuous, to abuse drugs and alcohol, etc. I ask you to raise your expectations of us. Call us to a higher level of accountability. It is way too easy for us to go in and out of relationships. Bless our relationships, and make them public and legal, so that it is at least as hard and wrong for us to be unfaithful as it is for straight people.

I think of this as a conservative argument for same-sex marriage. I also imagined a hypothetical gay or lesbian parishioner coming to me and announcing they have found the love of their life and that they want the blessing and support of the Church to live a life of fidelity with this person. In our Church the way we do that is to prepare people very intentionally to make this commitment, and then to bless them with great celebration. I think LGBT people should be given the same opportunity and the same responsibility as straight people.

JULIE: How welcome do you feel LGBT families are in your own Church--St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral?

DEAN LUCK: I hope LGBT people, families and singles, feel very comfortable at St. Paul’s. I am glad to say that I blessed a gay couple on their 20th anniversary, that we recently had a baptism for the child of a lesbian couple, and have another one coming for a lesbian couple who have recently joined St. Paul’s Cathedral. Amazingly, one of the women in the couple whose child was just baptized gave birth to the child, but in New York she must still adopt the child, as

must her partner. I have written letters of support on behalf of both of them to help them in the adoption process.

JULIE: What are the areas in which you feel the Cathedral is strong in acknowledging LGBT families?

DEAN LUCK: Frankly, I feel that we could be stronger. We do include the following in our welcoming brochure and our website, "Do you think you can be gay and Christian? Looking for Church home? At St. Paul's Cathedral you'll find fellow travelers and a community that celebrates all of God's children, the way God has made us."

I would like for our own LGBT folks to be more visible as LGBT people. Some are very willing and some are more hesitant, and that is of course their choice. But I often think the parishioners here are unaware of how much we depend on LGBT people for this Cathedral to do much of anything. LGBT folks are very involved, not only in our liturgical ministries, but on the Vestry and a number of other committees as well.

JULIE: What are other thoughts, concerns, and aspirations that you have for LGBT inclusion in the Episcopal Church?

DEAN LUCK: I hope the day will come, and soon, that LGBT people are so much a part of civil and ecclesiastical life that the Church and society can get on to other issues of justice, such as the widening gap between rich and poor; and peacemaking that makes a real difference in the world. When LGBT people are full participants in that work, then there will be a greater chance that real change will come.